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THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY

ACCORDING TO LUTHER

AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN GERMANY

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BY

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CONTENTS

PREFACE 7

I. THE EXEGESIS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 23

II. THE FALSE MYSTICISM OF LUTHER. . . 54

III. THE ACCUSATION OF IMPOSTURE BY THE DEISTS 93

1. Dogmatism of early Lutheranism; the era of Pietism; the rise of Deism in England and France. 93

2. Lessing and Reimarus propose to Germany the Deistic explanation of Christianity. 105

3. The moral beauty of Jesus makes it impossible to believe that He and His friends were impostors. 117

IV. THE VIEWS OF ENLIGHTENED RATIONALISM 125

1. Jesus the most enlightened representative of enlightened reason. . . . 128

2. The activities of the Essenes explain the mysterious element in the Life of Jesus. Bahrdt and Venturini. . 134

3. Paulus systematically reduces the miracles to the proportions of natural events. 139

4. Compromise theology. Rationalism adopts the language of orthodox Protestantism; Hase, Schleiermacher. 149

V. STRAUSS'S MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL. 157

1918

1. Life of Strauss. 157
2. Strauss's first Life of Jesus. 168

VI. The Tübingen School on the Origin of Christianity. 195
1. Baur's reconstruction of Christian Origins. 197
2. Baur's System tested by his disciples. 204
3. The Apostolic witness consistent. . 211
4. Greek Philosophy and St. Paul. . . 222

VII. The Compromise of the Liberals. . . 230
1. Orthodox reaction against Strauss and the radicalism of Bruno Bauer. 230
2. A German *Via Media*. 237
3. Liberal Criticism of the Gospels . . 244
4. The Jesus of Liberal Theology. . . 257

VIII. The discovery by Johannes Weiss of Eschatological Messianism. . . . 267
1. The Eschatological System as presented by A. Schweitzer 271
2. Criticism of the Eschatological System concerning the Reign of God. . 279
3. The Eschatologists' Messias 297

IX. Judeo-Pagan Syncretism. 308
1. Christianity an amalgamation of Judaism and Paganism. 308
2. The Doctrine of the Spirit. 314
3. Pagan Initiations and Christian Baptism. 320
4. The Eucharist. 336

X. Conclusions. 347
1. The Savior God and Jesus of Nazareth. 348
2. Present Position of German Exegetes. 357
3. Causes of the Failure of German Exegesis. 365
4. Continuity of the Church's Teaching. 372

Index of Authors 379

PREFACE

These lectures review the successive attempts made by German exegetes to replace the Catholic explanation of the origin and nature of Christianity. They were delivered in the Catholic Institute of Paris, at the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918. I had to write them far away from our dear little Jerusalem library; and I was not sufficiently acquainted with the great libraries of Paris to be able to use them with the best advantage. Besides, I have found that these libraries — even the *Bibliothèque Nationale* — do not furnish complete information concerning the exegetical literature of Germany. This will partly explain the use I have made of the work of Mr. Albert Schweitzer, on the " History of Research Relative to the Life of Jesus. "[1] In places, I hardly more than give an account of what he has said. I acknowledge this indebtedness all the more readily that Mr. Schweitzer is evidently a man of very vigorous mind and very straightfor-

1. *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, by Albert Schweitzer, Tübingen, 1913. It is the second edition of the work first entitled, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*. The English translation, by W. Montgomery, is entitled, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (2nd ed. London, 1911).

ward character, who does not hesitate to admit the lamentable failure of that scientific movement of which Germany is so proud; his personal solution we shall appreciate in due time.

I had come to my eighth lecture before I heard of Father Fillion's book on " The Stages of Rationalism in its Attacks against the Gospel and the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. " [1] It was not without confusion that I immediately confessed to my audience this bibliographical *lacuna.* Father Fillion is very erudite, his plan is much like the one I had chosen, partly in accordance with Schweitzer; and I would not have taken up the subject had I known that the public was so well informed concerning it. Having begun the series of lectures I had to finish it; but the usefulness of a book on a topic so well handled by the learned Sulpician might be questioned. On reflection, it appeared to me that there were sufficient differences between my work and that of Father Fillion to justify a second book. Father Fillion is more complete; his inquiry takes in France and England. While this is a great advantage, it may not be without interest to isolate typical cases in an exegesis which has incontestably served as a model for the others. Then, the judgment passed upon German exegesis, taken as a whole, is not the same. The title chosen by Father Fillion, *The Stages of Rationalism,* indicates that he is more particularly impressed by

1. *Les étapes du rationalisme dans ses attaques contre les évangiles et la vie de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ,* Paris, 1911.

the destructive character of independent exegesis, which he regards as an engine of war against Revelation. There is much truth in this view; but in Germany, the theologians who have practiced the difficult art of criticism have often had in mind to construct a religious edifice — for the use of Germans, of course. Finally, Father Fillion relies, with good reason, on the repulsive effects upon healthy minds of the licence of thought in which these theologians have indulged; I, on my part, have sought to enforce this impression by positive arguments against the systems which I have expounded, particularly in the case of those modern systems which still exert an influence.

Written in haste, and in circumstances brought about by the war, these pages have not taken on any accent of rancor. It is true that from the awful catastrophe a light has been struck, a light which rekindles a hope. The light is that which comes from a better realization of the truth of the inspired words: *Væ soli!* Woe to one who isolates himself! The hope is that we may have once more a society of nations, — a society which, to become complete, must seek religious unity through the Church.

The great crime of Lutheran Germany is to have destroyed this unity. Again, I speak without bitterness. Germanism has a reason to exist as an element of universal culture, and German religious sentiment, under the Church's influence, has yielded marvelous fruits of holiness and virtue. Rome, which inherited the ancient civilization,

and became the teacher of Christian doctrine, educated the barbarians; and Germany brought new forces to Rome. In the great body of Christendom, she represented a distinct civilization, but one which was not isolated; she did not reject the softening influences of classical taste, and submitted her violent instincts to the curb of ecclesiastical discipline. Too often, it is true, she sought to dominate by force the government of the Church; but at any rate she did consent to be a member of the society, more ideal, alas! than real, of Christian nations. There can be no doubt that the German principle of loyalty to certain ruling families has been an element of stability; the atrocious Italian tyrannies of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance allow us to imagine what would have become of Romanized Europe without this principle of order, to which the Church gave divine sanction.

But where the Roman and Christian principle of discipline had not prevailed, men bore with impatience the authority of the Roman See. Revolt broke out. For a long time, Germany seemed as careful to maintain her place in the concert of European nations as she was to show independence of Rome. She received much from the radiation of France; and she applied herself to contribute her share to the development of the sciences. At the end of the eighteenth century, she made up her mind to keep more to herself and to break with French culture; but she sheltered her own renaissance under the genius of Shakespeare, and Gœthe urged her to draw from Greek

sources a sense of proportion and of form, to borrow from the French Theatre its nobility and its beauty. Schiller himself, who had begun with *Die Raüber,* and who understood the French character so poorly, endeavored by his translation of Racine's *Phèdre* to bring his fellow-countrymen back to sane traditions of art.

However, Germany's tendency to free herself from all outside influences, or rather to domineer over all, finally prevailed. National pride was unleashed, and it indulged the insensate dream of a culture which should be all the more perfect for being intensely autonomous, the unhindered product of an elect race, exclusive of all foreign contributions. It is when Germany thought the development of this native civilization perfect, that she made her attempt to obtain control of the world by the power of her arms, pretexting the design of bringing it happiness. After having broken with the Church, she broke with mankind.

There can be no doubt that exegesis was a factor in the projected conquest. And Germany's exegesis had as a matter of fact obtained in the world a credit which was scarcely less notable than that of her most efficient industries.

One need not be hostile to the Germans, as men and Christians, to hope that this chimera will meet with the fate of Babel. They have not gained by their isolation; all this vast design, more or less conscious, ended only in a regression towards antecedent barbarism. We form for them, most cordially, the wish that they may once more take their place, whatever it may be, in that common

work of mankind in which all must help one another.

In the spiritual sphere, with which alone we are here concerned, national religions have been incapable of satisfying the human soul; this is particularly true since the day Christianity called all men to the worship of the same Father, under the influence of the same Savior. The effort to create a distinctively German religion, which should be imposed upon the rest of the world by the ascendency of the German peoples and of their culture, was, consequently, doomed to failure. It was bound to be shattered upon that Rock whereon Jesus Christ built His Church. We shall try to say how.

But we would also tell the story of the immense effort made by the exegetes of Germany, and show how it may be of profit to Truth, if we know how to employ it in the service of a method which is more reliable, because it is divine.

We shall see that the Catholic Church has reason to thank God. She has faithfully retained the old dogmatic interpretation of texts, and it will be recognized ever more clearly that this interpretation is above reproach in the eyes of reason.

This success of the Church is due above all to the assistance which Christ promised His Apostles. And under divine protection, it may be attributed to the faithfulness of Catholics to tradition; a traditional interpretation handed down in such a society as the Church is more apt to be right, in matters in which the society is vitally concerned,

than are the results obtained by individual minds however powerful their efforts may be. Can we add that the work of Catholic critics has contributed to the triumph of the Church's dogmatic interpretation? To a certain extent it has so contributed, no doubt; but, unless I am mistaken, only slightly.

The work of Catholic scriptural scholars in defense of the Church's interpretation has not equalled, either in intensity or in the copiousness of its products, that of independent critics; and what Catholics have done by positive achievement to forestall attacks is still less creditable. It would be an unprofitable task to demonstrate the truth of this assertion.

And what does it matter whether or not Catholics apply themselves to the defense of Catholic exegesis? some persons may inquire. Since non-Catholic critics devour one another we may leave it to them to defend us. The Church guarantees us the possession of the truth; that is enough.

It is enough for the greater number, and all must, finally, lean on the Church's authority for dogmatic interpretation. But we have only to look around us to see that great harm is being done to souls by the most venturesome and the least warranted assertions of independent exegetes. I do not speak of Protestant countries alone; no one is ignorant of what is going on within the Catholic Church herself. And let us bear in mind that the ravages of false exegesis are wrought in the most cultured minds, more particularly in those minds whose very vocation binds them to scriptural studies, and whose fall is more deplorable and more

resounding. Twice, within the memory of many of us, the earth seemed to shake. I refer to the period which followed the publication of Renan's " Life of Jesus " and that which, more recently, followed M. Loisy's publication of " The Gospel and the Church. " In these hours of crises pamphlets were multiplied by the hundred, containing more or less apposite refutations, all written in haste; and they were offered to a public which was ill prepared for such an assault. We know what the work of the eleventh hour is worth in warfare. It may ward off supreme catastrophes, but it can never completely supply for long and patient preparations. Let us not wait until danger is upon us.

The work to be done by Catholic scholars is suggested by the experience of their enemies. The anti-dogmatic exegesis of the Germans profited by their philological and historical studies. It is repeatedly asserted that those who are competent in the knowledge of etymology and of syntax more readily understand the sense of a text; that those who have accumulated all the means of knowing antiquity, are the men who are best fitted to appreciate the religious movement of Judaism and Christianity. Who can deny the plausibility of this assertion? We must have scholars of equal competenc , able to discern between what is based on the scientific knowledge of language and of history and what is derived from the philosophical theories of the exegete; able to detect the subjective element which glides in between the technical explanation of words and sentences and the appreciation of their meaning, between

exegesis in the strict sense and the exegetical system taken as a whole, with its presuppositions and assumptions. These Catholic exegetes must be sufficiently trained in textual criticism to call attention to arbitrary alterations or rejections of texts; they must be sufficiently versed in the comparative study of religions to judge the various manifestations of the religious spirit and to denounce the prejudice which would place on an equal footing manifestations which are very unequal. To fit oneself for the work which the present condition of biblical science imposes upon the Catholic scholar, there is manifestly much work to be done; and those who have at heart to accomplish the task which confronts them, must not neglect the lessons of organization of which the Germans have given us the example. Work and organization are the secret of their efficiency.

The Germans have done much work. This is not due to a special endowment of the race. In centuries past they were not regarded as particularly alive concerning intellectual matters. But already at the end of the eighteenth century their philological and historical studies began to rival ours. Lack of political unity favored the prosperity of numerous universities, in which theology — of some kind or other — ever occupied an honorable place, and ever exerted an active influence. Now it so happened that the development of studies, particularly the unexpected development of the study of the languages and the civilizations of the ancient Orient, made it strictly necessary for biblical scholars to use that comparative method

which can only be pursued in a university, by specialists who can agree. The Germans knew how to unite in order to procure indispensable tools, to produce collective works, — acting in that mass formation with which they are familiar. Under present conditions the collaboration of many scholars is necessary for the success of an encyclopedia, a dictionary, a collection of inscriptions. The *Thesaurus* of the Latin language is not produced by one academy; it represents the collective efforts of several learned bodies. The dictionary of mythology of Roscher, the encyclopedia of Pauly-Wissowa, the great collections of Greek inscriptions and of Latin inscriptions, still more perhaps the Teubner editions of the classics, illustrate the advantages of division of labor. Moreover, not only do we see in these great instruruments of work results which could never have been achieved by individual workers, but we see in them means of co-ordinating obscure efforts to which scholars would not submit were they not sustained by a certain corporative instinct. Germans know how to resign themselves to the toil of collecting little facts, of analyzing patiently phenomena of grammar, of taking note of the texts relating to a given subject; and it is in this way, rather than by their theories, that they have made us their tributaries. Their musical sense made them understand the power of the orchestra, and there is no orchestra where everyone insists on playing a violin *solo*.

I do not maintain that we have to imitate them in a servile manner, to do as well as they. We

have but to come back to our old traditions. Are not the great Benedictine collections an ever-present monument to the spirit of abnegation in scientific study? In our own days, the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités* is as creditable to the application of its collaborators as to the judiciousness of its principal director, the regretted Mr. Saglio. But it took a long time; and in this case the time element is important, for the divergencies between the first articles and the last become very perceptible. We have undertaken the *Corpus* of Semitic Inscriptions, so useful to biblical studies, and the collection of the historians of the crusades; but I remember hearing Mr. Perrot, the perpetual secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, exhort his confrères not to neglect the collective enterprises upon which the learned body was engaged. Scholars upon whom rests the scientific renown of France should be allowed to consecrate themselves entirely to personal works; but they should have auxiliaries.

Besides co-ordinating the work of many of her scholars, Germany has been particularly successful in securing continuity. Nothing is more favorable to the advancement of learning than handing down the same works, in editions kept strictly up to date. Our predecessors were already obliged to them for the Hebrew Grammar and the Hebrew Dictionary of Gesenius; its superiority was recognized. Hebrew studies have made great progress; but young and old still use the same works. Kautzsch, who had revised them, has already disappeared. Others will replace him. A similar

revision is given to the old Greek Dictionary of Passow, completed by Mr. Crœnert. Who would have thought Germans so faithful to tradition? The reason is, that this continuity favors the success of works. One prefers to do business with an old firm, honorably known, provided it keeps up with modern improvements.

This spirit of organization, productive of collective works and of perpetuated works, requires a sense of hierarchy and respect for recognized superiority. And this abnegation has its immediate reward. The perpetuated work moves in a path that is already traced out, solicits attention without disturbing habits. The collective work is one that is directed. The eccentricities and the aberrations of the individual judgment, notoriety-seeking extravagances, the itching ambition to mark an era, are rarer in them than in those isolated works in which a Wrede or a Jensen is able to give himself a free rein. These massive efforts are powerful, because all conspires to make the same doctrine prevail. This power, of course, adds to the danger they create if their doctrine is false. Happily, in exegesis as in war, Germany excels in preparation more than in execution; her grammars and dictionaries are more solid than the constructions which she keeps putting up in all styles, ever unwearied and never satisfied.

What I have said of the scientific work of Germany must make it clear that no patriotic sentiment can dispense scholars of other countries from reading German books. Even when one is on his guard against their conclusions, he cannot

but learn something from fellow-workers who are patient and persevering, with a curiosity which is ever on the alert, with a useful mania for references and bibliographical indications.

I now beg permission to make a few observations which refer to our Jerusalem school of Biblical studies.

We have had the very high ambition, in this Palestinian school, to give to the public a complete series of biblical works, bearing at the same time the stamp of faith and of good faith, works which would be both Catholic and French. We have published our program. [1] It is not for us to pass judgment on the value of what we have accomplished.

Some have charged us with having too much

1. *Revue Biblique* 1900, " Project of a complete commentary of the Sacred Scriptures. " Father Lagrange here urges the need of a Catholic commentary, based on a good translation of the original text, following the findings of careful textual criticism, and giving particular attention to literary criticism; and he appeals for collaborators. He has himself published (Librairie Victor Lecoffre, Paris) *Le Livre des Juges,* 1903; *Évangile selon Saint Marc,* 1911; *Épître aux Romains,* 1916; *Épître aux Galates,* 1918, and in the same series of *Études Bibliques, Le Messianisme chez les Juifs* (200 B. C. — 150 A. D.), 1909; *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques,* 1903; CALMES has contributed l'*Évangile selon Saint Jean,* 1907; CONDAMIN, S. J., *Le Livre d'Isaïe,* 1905; Van HOONACKER, *Les douze Petits Prophètes,* 1908; P. DHORME, O. P., *Les Livres de Samuel,* 1910; E. PODECHARD, S. S., *L'Ecclésiaste,* 1912; H. VINCENT, O. P., *Canaan d'après l'exploration récente,* 1907; A. JAUSSEN, O. P., *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab,* 1908. *L'École Pratique d'Études Biblique établie au Couvent Dominicain Saint-Étienne de Jérusalem,* has published the *Revue Biblique* since 1892. (Translator's note).

regard for German science, and even of being inspired by its conclusions.

We should ask that this accusation be not accepted as well grounded before our writings have been read; for I do not ask for a rereading on the part of those who have followed our work. What is true is that, not oversensitive about the disdain which German periodicals have manifested for us by silence, or even by contemptuous allusions, we have made it a rule to present to our readers all the German works which were within our reach, and that our tone when dealing with serious authors has always been courteous. Our sincerity in analysis is almost the only point for which we have received credit from our opponents. For opponents they remained for us, as soon as their exegesis raised itself up to dogmatic subjects. For a long time the *Revue Biblique* was the only periodical which tried to point out the defects of their argumentation.

We have made much use of German works, especially of those which were not theological, confessing frankly both that they were ahead of our own and that we were anxious to catch up with, and even to surpass them. I stated above that we were in many ways their tributaries. This expression should be banished from the domain of scholarship. A serious worker thinks only of putting his good will at the service of others; if they utilize it, he considers that an honor has been done him, not that tribute has been paid. On occasion, we have rendered our neighbors this homage, which was only justice.

We shall, please God, treat them in the future as we have done in the past. It will be easier, it seems to me, to agree with them, in many things; for the schools which promise to triumph among them are those whose exegesis most closely resembles that of the Church. These schools come nearer to the real meaning of the claims of Christ and nearer to a right understanding of His message. If, knowing the true sense of the New Testament, and admitting that it faithfully represents the mind of Christ, they nevertheless reject Him, it is a matter which concerns their conscience and their prejudices; it will not be a result of their exegesis. Their exegetical work is apt, not merely to give a strong confirmation to the interpretation of the Church in the eyes of unbelievers, but to help clear up for Catholics many an obscure point where there is no official interpretation.

In the presence of the flagrant contempt for truth manifested by certain German intellectuals during this war, some Frenchmen have come to see that it was a mistake too readily to prefer independent German exegesis to the exegesis of Catholicism. Catholic exegesis is likely to gain a more favorable hearing in the future; but those who cultivate it must profit by the lessons we have learned. We must apply ourselves to philology and history with more earnestness; we must unite our efforts, to secure the advantages derived from association and continuity; we must be ready, too, in the light of a better knowledge of language and of the history of doctrine, to sacrifice untenable theses, thus entering firmly upon the way marked

out by Pius X : — " As we must condemn the rashness of those who, more docile to the seductions of novelty than to the teaching of the Church, do not hesitate to indulge in excessive freedom in the matter of biblical criticism, it is likewise incumbent upon us to disapprove of the attitude of those who do not dare to break in any way with current views in regard to the meaning of the Scriptures, even when, faith remaining unaffected, the wise progress of studies imperiously invites them to do so ". (Letter to Bishop Le Camus, Jan. 11, 1906.)

M. J. LAGRANGE, O. P.

Paris, March, 1918.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY

ACCORDING TO

LUTHER AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN GERMANY

FIRST LECTURE.

THE EXEGESIS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

I propose in this series of conferences to discuss the views on Christianity which have found favor with the successive generations of the exegetes of Germany. The exegesis of the Catholics of that country does not figure in our program. It has, indeed, a character of its own, and its study would not be devoid of interest; but it is in the main only a dependency of the exegesis of the great Church, and its exponents will not feel slighted if it is not labeled with the national name. The words "German Exegesis" may with propriety be reserved to that exegesis of Germany which glories in its independence, and which is independent at least of the Catholic Church; this is the German exegesis which is spoken of, and followed, in England and America, and which exerts no little

influence even amongst us, Catholics of the Latin countries. It is a form of German activity which has made itself felt in the world ever since the days of Luther, and it has shown incredible ardor during the last century and a half. Frequently hostile to Christianity, it has most often only sought to transform Christianity according to the mind of the Germany of its day. We shall endeavor to determine in what this activity consists, the means which it employs, and its results.

***

The object of the exegesis of the New Testament, the purpose of the unwearied and intense efforts made by so many German scholars with all the resources of modern science, has been, at bottom, to discover the real meaning of Christianity.

I avoid the word *essence,* employed in this connection by one of the most famous German exegetes; [1] it suggests that one is more interested in the selection of doctrines which are to be retained for practical purposes than in the objective study of facts. This ulterior motive has been a determining influence with not a few of the critics whose work we shall review. All have, it seems, asked themselves how Christianity arose, in what it first consisted, how it presented itself to the world, and how it was understood by those who adopted

1. *Das Wesen des Christentums,* by Adolph Harnack, Leipzig, 1900; Cf. *Revue Biblique,* 1901, pp. 110 ff. Translated into English under the title *What is Christianity?* by Thomas Bailey Saunders, 2nd. ed., New York, 1903.

it. That it is essentially a religion, goes without saying; but how was it founded, why did it prevail? It is to find this out that texts are scrutinized.

For it is not here question of the religious or moral value of Christianity, of the forces which it can offer to the modern world, of the light and consolations which it brings to souls, but of the study of its beginnings according to the most ancient documents we possess, and this is why our title speaks of exegesis.

This Greek word " exegesis " means simply the explanation of a writing. But how is it, many ask, that it is still necessary to discuss the meaning of writings which have been so much studied for centuries? Brunetière himself thought that this study would doubtless soon be ended.

We might, indeed, hope for such a consummation, if there were a well established method and if the explanation of the texts in question did not involve such serious consequences. These texts are, as you know, the writings of the New Testament, namely the Gospels, the Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse of St. John. Controversy always comes back to them, even with those who do not recognize in them any sacred character, because they are the most ancient and the most immediate documents concerning Christian origins.

Criticism takes up these documents; first of all textual criticism, charged with the examination of the manuscripts. We shall not speak of this work of textual criticism, because the texts of the New Testament do not present variants which

are important enough to involve a change in the concept of Christianity.

Placed in presence of his documents the exegete begins his work. It requires great skill and care. The texts he would interpret are ancient. He has to determine the sense of words, and it is frequently elusive, for lack of documents. He has to appreciate shades of meaning involved in the peculiar grammatical structure and the style of the period, and take into account the character of his author. He has, above all, to endeavor to enter into this author's mind, by the study of the ideas of his time and of his preoccupations; to get at the writer's sources, seize his allusions to things and persons, place actions in their setting, that is to say, reconstruct the life of a period which will ever be strange to us. This difficulty of projecting oneself into the past is such that scholars do not always agree about the interpretation of a verse of Horace. But at least they generally agree in the case of the classics. Why is it not so in the domain of the New Testament? Because the consequences are different.

A well-known example will show you what I mean. Let us take Homer. He was, in a way, a religious teacher. Men long admired his gods and goddesses, those creations of beauty. The Greek of average culture admitted in good faith that Zeus and Aphrodite — such a majestic Zeus, such a charming Aphrodite! — belonged to the realm of the divine. Philosophers had higher ideas about the deity, but even they could not all make up their minds as did Plato, to expel the

poet from a Greek republic, even if the process were facilitated by crowning him with flowers. So they began to apply exegesis to the Homeric poets. It was explained that the gods of Olympus were powers of nature or symbols. Those who thus explained the ancient songs affected a higher admiration for the divine poet, who taught such deep wisdom under so seductive a form. Young people could henceforth go back to the source of all poetry, without being enabled to justify bad conduct by Olympian examples. This Stoic exegesis was not without influence in antiquity. Modern critics see in it only a strange aberration. No one now believes that Aphrodite was wounded. and that a scratch drew from her piercing shrieks. But it is in the text; one must see in it a character trait of the goddess of pleasure, without looking for any mystery. Scientific exegesis thus comes back to popular exegesis. But it makes little difference what we think about Aphrodite. But how important for us is the meaning of Christianity! According as its dogmas are true or false, all one's life is changed; and these vital dogmas are contained in books which support them by miracles and other supernatural elements. According to the interpretation one gives these books, one will, or will not, be a Christian, with all the serious engagements which are involved in the profession of the Christian religion, or with all the deceptive facilities which freedom from this yoke allows.

But, it is said, one may honestly take up the texts as they are, without any other preoccupation than to understand them according to the laws of

language and history. Only after we know what they say shall we ask ourselves what is to be thought of their teaching. It may even appear that the best exegete must be the one who can remain the most entirely unconcerned about the results of exegesis. Decided not to admit the supernatural, he may recognize with equanimity that the author he is studying intended to tell of supernatural occurrences. He will aim only at determining, in the light of history, just what the text meant. Thus will the exegesis of the New Testament be carried on with the same impartiality as that of Homer. An unbeliever may be a perfect commentator.

I believe you would find it hard to discover such a neutral. If he exists, I wish to know him; for I accept him at once as a useful ally. And, as a matter of fact, I acknowledge that the exegesis of those who are out and out unbelievers is to me less open to suspicion than that of men who cultivate exegesis for the advantage of their doctrines. To give you my secret immediately, I believe that it is the interest of our studies to avow that the exegesis of Germany draws near to us in the measure that her exegetes leave aside Protestant and philosophical theories. This fact will become plain from the study of German exegesis which we are now beginning.

You propose to treat the exegesis of the New Testament like that of Homer, with the same detachment as regards religious convictions. Gentlemen, is this possible? Before answering me, take note of two differences. The first difference

is that the marvelous events related by the ancient singer did not take place in his own time. He records old myths. The Greece of Pisistratus, on the eve of its war against the Persians, confiding in its gods, worthy to hear the deeply religious accents of Æschylus, animated by a faith which was serious and almost tragical, this heroic Greece may have been under an illusion regarding the conviction of the poet whose grace charmed her. It may be that the people of Athens did not as yet understand the subtle irony, the nonchalant gracefulness of the aristocratic societies of Ionia and of an already refined period. It matters little. When faith was nothing but a slight attachment to types of beauty, it was easy either to relegate the supernatural to the rank of pure fables, or to interpret it at will. Whether Homer believed or not in the gods whose adventures he sings, he assuredly did not pretend to guarantee the truth of all he said. He neither claimed to be a witness of the events themselves nor of a carefully maintained tradition. Men continued to admire his stories without believing them. Is it necessary to admit even the existence of Priam and of Achilles, to shed tears as we listen to the prayer of the old king bereft of his Hector?

I need hardly remark that it is otherwise with the New Testament. The events therein recorded took place in the light of history. To doubt them one must reject the testimony of almost contemporaneous writings. Absolute scepticism concerning the existence of Jesus and of the Apostles is almost inconceivable. We hear of miracles; they are

affirmed by the disciples of the Master, and determine the conviction of a community which is coming into existence; it is a religion which is taking shape. I shall not insist; we shall come back to this capital point. You must see, however, that one cannot here affect the attitude which critics take towards the mythology of Homer. You may find a non-Christian critic who will maintain that no consideration will prevent him from interpreting texts correctly. I doubt this imperturbability; for if he denies the reality of the miraculous, he will soon be obliged to conclude that the witnesses were either deceived or deceivers, he will be obliged to ascribe to the Savior Himself the part of an accomplice or of the victim of a delusion. It is impossible that this attitude towards the witnesses and the central person of the New Testament, should not affect exegesis properly so called. The words themselves have not the same meaning if the apparitions of the risen Savior must be interpreted as a piece of trickery or an hallucination. Exegesis obliges you to recognize in Jesus incomparable uprightness. If you take that into account you cannot make of Him the companion and accomplice of sharpers. At the very least, if the supernatural disappears from the New Testament, it is no longer anything but a work without truth, and hence without dignity. And since this lie or this error still rules over a great part of the known world, people must be taught to read between the lines. What really matters is not to explain the text, but to unmask the fraud, to find indications of it in the text itself. Will this still be loyal and

correct exegesis? You agree that it cannot be.

And nevertheless a more serious danger threatens the book and it comes from those who respect it more. Here we come to the second difference between the exegesis of the New Testament and that of Homer.

Why was it thought undesirable that young people should read Homer, or why did interpreters seek violently to give him a meaning he never thought of? Because his supernatural was immoral. His gods acted like rogues, and young men could cite Homer in defense of their escapades. They studied him at school during their most impressionable years. The danger of this education was a commonplace of Christian apologetics; and the Christian apologists borrowed it from Greek and Latin comedy. Whatever the divine poet may have said about it,[1] his gods were more worthless than men. But one might, at any rate, admire the conjugal love of Andromache, the valor of Achilles, the wifely constancy of Penelope. By removing the supernatural, one might safeguard morals. The two elements were not inseparable. The gods of Homer had at least the decency not to set themselves up as preachers of virtue.

Is it not a blasphemy to pass now to the New Testament? No, since the difference is evident. In the primitive Church, faith and morals are

1. He says in the Iliad (IX, 498) that the gods have more "virtue," are more honored and more powerful than men, τῶν περ καὶ μείζων ἀρετὴ τιμή τε βίη τε and that they may be moved by sacrifices and prayers; but the "virtue" in question is only the valor of the hero.

closely bound together, as they are in the preaching of Jesus. And, in spite of so many essays to formulate an independent system of ethics, — perhaps because they have been followed by just as many failures, — minds preoccupied about the maintenance of public morals, even when they have no faith, are in no hurry to break with Christianity, or with Jesus Christ. If only one could interpret the Gospel like the apology of Socrates or the dialogues of Plato, in such a way as to attenuate its provoking supernaturalism, to make its miracles disappear! Again, this is not a chimerical concept. It is a point over which I pass rapidly, because we shall come back to it. You readily see that such a disposition is still more fatal to exegesis than a complete detachment from all that Christianity is, dogma and morals. Now even Renan himself, that smiling sceptic, ceaselessly on guard against his own tendencies to credulity, preoccupied solely, it seemed, about not doubting enough, and about his doubt itself, Renan did not resist the temptation to present an image of Jesus which was very far from reality, lest the charming Galilean should abandon the modern world to its harshness and vulgarity. The supreme danger of exegesis strictly so-called is in this ceaselessly recurring effort to reconcile the texts of the Gospel with philosophical opinions or moral tendencies. Now you know that philosophy and morals are the two things in which the devotees of German culture particularly glory. And because she does not wish to renounce a Christianity which was regenerated by becoming

German with Luther, and which she calls evangelical, Germany tirelessly works at the exegetical problem presented by the New Testament.

In a word, gentlemen, unlike the writings of Homer or Vergil, Thucydides or Titus Livius, Demosthenes or Cicero, the New Testament contains an affirmation which concerns us, which still asserts a claim upon us. The unbeliever, if he abandons practical scepticism to examine into it and to discuss it, must demolish its pretentions and its titles; and this places him very far from that elegant ivory tower where one may in peace relish the antique form while smiling at the childishness of the content.

And if the debate bore only upon the correct interpretation of texts! But, precisely because the texts are troublesome, exegesis devotes itself to forms of activity which are, strictly speaking, outside of its province. The custom has prevailed to speak, for instance, of the " exegesis of Renan, " to indicate a whole conception of the beginnings of Christianity. In time it was noticed — it was especially from the days of Strauss — that if anything except the traditional interpretation was to be drawn from texts, it was necessary to begin by opposing one to another the writings of the New Testament, and even to dissect the documents. It was only with these broken and worked over materials that a new edifice could be erected. Literary criticism could succeed with the work only by utilizing history, which with its now highly developed powers, could serve to date the writings. Once it had entered upon the

scene, history must be interrogated concerning the intellectual and moral state of Israel, and of all the ancient world. German exegesis has not recoiled before this inquiry, thus greatly enlarging the domain of a science erstwhile confined to the explanation of the canonical texts.

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Before entering upon a review of the work accomplished by German exegetes in this vast field, we need to light up our way, and perhaps to anticipate certain doubts. We have spoken of the danger of studying ancient texts with preconceived ideas. But if one adheres to the dogmas of the Church, does he not expose himself to the same danger? Does the Catholic Church of to-day, after nineteen centuries, preserve the primitive meaning of Christianity? Is she not prone to read into it what she believes? What are her methods, and what guarantee do they offer?

I hear your answer beforehand; if I recall what you already know, it is to get a clearer notion, together with you, of the right way, before taking up the details of the German systems which have succeeded one another since Luther.

The Church, we say, is in the right conditions to expound correctly the meaning of primitive Christianity.

The first and principal of these conditions, the only one which is decisive, is that she is assisted by the Holy Ghost to do so. For us, Catholic Christ-

ians, it is a matter of faith; and it is in the logic of things. We believe that God has given revelation to man and that He assures the benefit of it in the Church of Jesus Christ. He has, consequently, seen to it that this revelation be preserved intact. It is contained in the Sacred Books; it is necessary then that the Church, the custodian of revelation, be assured of transmitting faithfully the meaning of the Word of God.

But even if we leave aside this mysterious element, which the human mind cannot grasp, we may claim that the Church possesses the disposition and the method necessary for a correct exegesis.

We say, then, that the Church is in the right state of mind; its method is based on tradition, and on the synthesis of the results furnished by all the means at her disposal; she practices an exegesis characterized by good sense and clarity. We must explain these points.

I set down as a principle of criticism that the understanding of texts is easier when one is in the same state of mind as the author. What is the significance of the rules about taking into account the local coloring, the environment in which the writers moved, the time, the monuments, the customs, the life? Criticism aspires only to one thing which is, alas! multiple and diverse: to live in thought in the time and place in which the author acted, and, if not to penetrate into his thought, at least to take a place among his auditors, to acquire their dispositions, to read and listen like them.

If this principle is evident, there is another thing just as certain, and that is that the New Testament came from authors who believed in the supernatural and who wrote for people deeply imbued with the same faith, for whom miracles were possible. Now, the Catholic Church — whether we admire or condemn her for it — is also deeply imbued with faith in the supernatural. You do not ask me to define the supernatural and the miraculous. It would be necessary to begin another series of lessons. I take the words in their current meaning of a divine intervention outside of the normal course of secondary causes. Catholics are not behind others in explaining natural phenomena without recourse to voluntary agents. But the Church believes, as people did in the days of Jesus Christ, in the transcendency of God, His sovereign power over nature, the existence of angels and demons, the possibility of miraculous cures. When she meets these facts in Scripture, she will not be tempted to translate them into natural phenomena in order to explain them more easily. She is, then, in an excellent condition of mind to interpret the texts just as they are.

Men often reproach the Church with the immutability of her dogmas, which they declare antiquated. It would be equitable not to reproach her at the same time with modernizing her interpretation of Scripture. She confronts criticism with courage; let her be credited at least with sincerity.

Not only is the Church in the same state of mind, regarding the supernatural, as the first

Christian community; she is the same society, depositary of the same faith; she continues the primitive community by an uninterrupted tradition. She admits, indeed, just as unreservedly as did the Protestants of old, the authority of Scripture to teach revealed truth. Every Christian knows that God revealed to men certain truths useful to their salvation. A book is naturally an effective means to preserve these truths; a book inspired of God preserves them with a kind of divine authenticity. The word of God which resounded in the ear, or rather in the soul, of the prophets, is thus perpetuated. The obligation under which the Israelites were to look upon the Bible as a divine book and to read it, kept them in contact with the voice of the Lord. And this voice had been able to render certain truths very clear. An Israelite could not have the least doubt concerning the affirmation of the Bible that God is one, wise, almighty, and that He exacts of man a certain moral perfection. And likewise we do not for a moment think of denying the authority of the writings of the New Testament about the original meaning of Christianity. But we add thereto the information which is conveyed to us by tradition. We are forced to do this by history, for it is very clear that the faith was preached before the primitive Christian thought of writing, and that the writings we possess call for this complement. The Gospels are but a part of the teaching given by the Apostles concerning the life and miracles of Christ, concerning His Passion and Resurrection. These facts were interpreted in a

certain way; they had consequently a divine meaning which the Gospels do not develop, and which the Epistles of the Apostles take for granted rather than enunciate clearly. Take St. Paul, for instance. He explains to the Romans at sufficient length that the Gospel is a power of God which works through faith. But he was satisfied with a passing allusion to the objects of faith known by all Christians. [1] He reproaches the Galatians with abandoning the Gospel, the one he had preached to them; but he designates it only as the Gospel of Jesus crucified. This Gospel is sufficient without the law; this point he proves in detail; but he does not say in what the Gospel consists. If, then, Scripture had been the only means to assure the preservation of a doctrine which is much richer than the " weak and needy elements " of the old Law, God would have provided very poorly for its preservation. The answer of tradition is more complete and more precise. The New Testament contains neither a creed nor a sacramentary. And doctrine is preserved in the Church as an ever living and acting faith.

Precisely! it will be said. This faith lives, consequently it evolves, like all human things. With time it will give to the questions put before it answers more complete and more precise.

Granted, but this development is not a deformation. The Church, in virtue of a supernatural logic, which is at the same time perfectly rational,

1. Rom. I, 3 f.

regards the truth, which she has received from God Himself, as having an immutable character, and she is intent on transmitting it just as she received it in its substantial elements.

But do not forget that we are dealing here with this question of the development of doctrine only from the viewpoint of the exegete. The difficulty that is urged regards only the sincerity of interpretation. It may be thought that the exegesis of the Church, being imposed upon her by her dogma, will lack sincerity since it will lack liberty. The objection does not apply to Catholic exegesis. The danger it calls attention to may exist only for a society which has no other rule of faith than the Bible, and is bound to find therein all the truths which it professes. But such is not the case with the Church. Why should she torture texts to get from them what she can get from tradition? A Catholic may and must believe in dogma not enunciated in Scripture, as, for instance, in the perpetual virginity of Mary. He is not, then, obliged to have recourse to any violent form of exegesis. The texts remain undisturbed.

Will the situation be the same in the case of a dogma about which the Sacred Books do speak but which has taken on developments in the course of the centuries, clothed itself with formulas unknown to the primitive Church? I do not maintain that no commentator has given way to a desire to discover in the Scriptures, in a more or less explicit way, what was therein contained only implicitly. Some interpreters have not been

sufficiently concerned about the historical meaning of the words of the Bible, their exact bearing at the time when they passed from the mouth of the Apostle to the ears of the first disciples.

But these faults were most often committed in emulation of the example of those who could profess no doctrine which they did not read in Scripture, because they had given up the conception of a living Church, assisted by the Holy Ghost to develop dogma as well as to conserve it. They were not in the logic of a system in which due weight is given to the principle of a living tradition. If the formulas are not in Scripture, we shall not feel obliged to read them into it. And thus we have the sincerity of exegesis guaranteed, at the same time as its freedom.

Allow me to go to the end of my thought. I ask you not to go beyond it. The divinity of Jesus Christ is assuredly taught by the New Testament. But if this fundamental dogma were not therein contained, the Church, even in this matter, would not be obliged to force the texts; her living faith would be enough for her. And, in fact, the three first Gospels do not contain it in such a clear manner as the fourth. The Church was then able to live without the sublime teaching of the beloved disciple. We must praise God for having given us St. John; but St. John in no way constrains us to change the interpretations of the first Gospels.

Our opponents add a further objection, namely that Catholics may not give to the texts an interpretation which is contrary to the Church's doctrine. This is true. But, in the first place,

it must be allowed that this is perfectly rational, if one hold as we do that the dogma of the Church has not been transformed. The Church has received the Scriptures, and it is after all on her authority that we receive them ourselves. The books have not changed, we know by textual criticism. How suppose that the first Christians would have revered books containing a doctrine contrary to that which the Apostles had delivered to them? There are not two Gospels, St. Paul assured them. " Though we, or an angel from heaven preach to you a Gospel besides that which we preached to you, let him be anathema. " [1] The Galatians nearly succumbed to the seduction. But the Apostle was watching, and the Christian communities, very attentive to religious questions, mutually controlled one another. Remember how the matter of Judaic observances was referred to a plenary meeting at Jerusalem. [2] Would that very sensitive faith have received as the word of Christ writings contrary to what the Fathers of that faith had taught?

But do you insist on taking up the hypothesis of a transformation of dogma? Well, in that case, it is the primitive faith which would, in the long run, have transformed itself according to the doctrines of Scripture. So it is impossible to imagine that the present faith of the Church should oblige us to interpret the New Testament wrongly. You understand that I consent to discuss this

1. Gal. I, 8.
2. Acts xv.

chimerical case only in order to show the absurdity of the objection.

There may remain a difficulty about that rule of the Church which requires that Scripture be interpreted according to the unanimous consensus of the Fathers, in matters of faith and morals, such as that with which we are now dealing, when inquiring into the meaning of Christianity. This traditional interpretation restricts indeed the independence of the modern critic; but he should rejoice to find therein a help, as do workers in any other field. We ask the primitive Christians what primitive Christianity meant. If they do not agree, there is no traditional interpretation. If they do agree, why reject their testimony?

We may here remark that this method is precisely that which the most recent and most scientific exegesis seeks to practice : it is eager to consult all possible sources of information. The difference is only in this, that the Church has a preference for that information, about the meaning of Christianity, which comes from those who embraced it, doubtless after they had become well acquainted with it. She holds firmly to the testimony of the ancients. And this testimony is especially that of the Fathers, of those who were the pastors of the little Christian communities, of those who had the responsibility of teaching, who kept in close communion with the other churches, who were above all solicitous about the purity of that faith which is the earnest of life everlasting. I know that, absorbed as they were by these functions, they did not always have so cultivated

a mind as those who kept in touch with ancient letters. A St. Justin, a Clement of Alexandria, an Origen, interest us more than a St. Clement of Rome, a St. Ignatius, or a St. Irenæus, on account of their taste for philosophy, the extent of their erudition, their noble pride in proving to those whose curiosity was aroused that Christianity and its Scriptures had in them all that was needed to stand inquiry and criticism.

But were not these powerful personalities tempted, in order to make victory surer, to take untried paths, and, very specially, to interpret Scripture in their own way? With an instinct which was very sure, because it was divine, the Church understood, before modern studies of the science of religions, that religion is of its nature a social institution, and that the real sense of Christianity was to be found more integrally in Christian society than in the speculations of her most brilliant sons. If we had to give a decisive proof of the infallible tact of her exegesis, it would suffice to recall that she refused to have recourse to the too facile proceedings of allegory, which by a stroke of genius Origen discovered as a means to draw her out of difficulties. She rejected this allegorical method notwithstanding the fact that she saw in the Old Testament a prediction, almost a sketch of the kingdom of God founded by Jesus Christ. There was in the personages or the facts of the ancient history — St. Paul teaches clearly [1] — types or figures of the new covenant. There was

1. I Cor. x, 11; cf. Gal. iv, 24.

offered an easy passage from these types to symbols emptied of concrete reality; and how many difficulties at once disappeared! But in overcoming difficulties of detail, there was a fatal danger to which she was exposed. Criticism would not fail to stigmatize this too convenient subterfuge. Critics would have reminded us of the example of Homer. They would have shown us a Christianity ashamed of its cradle, like those religions which, when they are no longer in harmony with their intellectual environment, contrive to transform their gross and puerile myths by recourse to philosophical allegories.

What would be left of Christianity, if there had been applied to it the questionable treatment to which Philo of Alexandria submitted Moses, in order to make him acceptable to the Greeks? The ancient Fathers followed the dictates of their honesty, and remained faithful to tradition because it was the rule of their faith. Allegory was not admitted as a general rule for interpreting the Old Testament, and it did not even touch the exegesis of the New. Modern criticism will, then, acknowledge that the Church was well served in this very serious matter, by her attachment to tradition. Again, it will grant that, for the understanding of the primitive meaning of Christianity, the letter of Clement of Rome, the letters of St. Ignatius, are scarcely less important than the writings of the New Testament.

Consequently, neither tradition nor the Bible may be isolated. Assuredly God could, by His almighty power, have caused the truth to be

conserved in the Church without the gift of inspired writings. But nothing prevents us from admiring the means His wisdom did choose. Tradition is like running water; it follows a regulated course only when it is contained within banks. These banks are, together with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the written word of God. But this word is understood all the better for being perpetuated in an institution. Ask Hellenists what light literature receives from the inscriptions and papyri. The inscriptions frequently contain the text of laws to which literature made only fugitive allusions. The papyri restore to life the society to which the literature was addressed. How great their satisfaction, when a modern custom gives a key to an ancient text! [1] It should not seem unlikely to a scholar that the Church, which has celebrated the Eucharist from the first hour of her existence, offers the best commentary on the words of consecration.

Traditional, the method of the Church is synthetic in dealing with the writers of the New Testament.

When I say that the Church's method is synthetic, I mean that she disengages from all the New Testament writers a doctrine which she

1. An example. Greek custom allowed a father to drive from home an undutiful child, to exclude him from the family and from his succession. It had been supposed that this *apokeryxis* was only fictitious, a theme for rhetors' declamations. M. Cuq has proved that it was really practiced in antiquity and has discovered an act of the kind drawn up in 1911 by a notary of Kalabryta, in the Peloponnesus. (*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 1917, p. 353 ff.)

esteems common to all. Here criticism interrupts our very first words. This is precisely, it points out, a method to be avoided, for it neglects, both the individual opinions of the authors, and the development or evolution of doctrines. To explain St. Matthew by St. John, without regard to the proper genius of each writer, the purpose he pursued, the time which elapsed between the primitive catechesis and the redaction of the fourth Gospel, means to condemn oneself to unnatural, forced harmonization, to lose sight of the finer shades, to confuse the situations.

It would not be honest to deny that excessive harmonization has appeared here and there in Catholic commentators. In the second century, Tatian came near mixing everything up by combining the four Gospels into one. But the Church protested, too energetically we would almost say, since we are deprived of Tatian's Diatesseron.

She regarded the fourfold Gospel as sacred, and did not permit that the individuality of any one Gospel should be lost. She safeguarded the characteristic shades of meaning of each; but she considered that it was a matter of shades, and that the apostolic writings, redacted within a rather short period, did not admit of substantial differences. Our argument is at bottom the same as for the harmony of tradition and Scripture; it is merely applied to a more restricted field. Primitive Christianity will never be understood so long as people refuse to treat it as a society. [1] If the

1. St. Augustine has admirably said, *In Scripturis discimus Christum, in Scripturis discimus Ecclesiam* (*Epist.* CV, 14).

fourth Gospel, to adhere to our example, really emanates, as we affirm, from John, the son of Zebedee, eye-witness and disciple of the first hour, it must be granted that it represents the convictions of the first Christian generation. And in the hypothesis that it is the work of another John or of another not a John, would the communities have received it if they had found it in disagreement with the other Gospels regarding the capital point of the worship to be rendered to Jesus Christ? Each Gospel related in its own way the threefold denial of St. Peter and even the apparitions of the risen Christ. Since all came with recognized authority, it was supposed naturally that they were in agreement in the main, despite circumstances special to each. It was a matter of subtle questions which did not affect the faith. But would the early Church have borne with an anonymous or supposititious writing, contrary to the writings already received, which would have completely changed both religious convictions and conditions of worship? The synthetic method — which is not a method of harmonization at any price — must at the very least be tried first, in dealing with sacred documents as well as with others. It does not start out with the supposition that there was no controversy, no divergencies of views in the primitive Church. Evidence is too clear that there were. But just because these divergencies are known to us, they help us to draw a line between the region which was agitated and the region which was calm. There was, we see, some things concerning which all agreed. Jewish Christians regarded it as a

crime for St. Paul to reject the Jewish Law. Maybe, for all is possible in such matters, some one also reproached him for admitting the pre-existence of the Son of God in the bosom of His Father. But if the first point was agitated in the primitive Church, the second was not. It was, according to St. Paul, the foundation of the whole Christian faith. The fourth Gospel and the Pauline Epistles are at one on this basic truth.

Finally, because the Catholic Church represents a collective opinion, she is little given to accentuating in a sacred writer views which might seem particular. It is not she who will draw from an obscure phrase, or an obscure word, a whole system which would be in contradiction with views of the same author elsewhere clearly set forth. St. Augustine well expressed her mind when he said that Scripture contains hardly anything in obscure places that is not clearly enunciated somewhere else.

This is an exegesis of good sense and clarity which we will understand better by examples of the contrary practice. Let us cite only a case upon which we shall not have to come back. The fourth Gospel says that the Word was made flesh. We genuflect at Mass when we read these sublime words. But this is not a reason to interpret them rigorously, as if they were isolated from all context; we do not claim that the Word really became flesh, or that He united Himself to the flesh alone, without taking a human soul. The individual mind may delight in a narrow interpretation, in disengaging therefrom a new doctrine, in opposition

to ancient opinions and the theology of its time. The Church, a collective authority, is the natural home of common sense. It will point out that the Apostles cannot either have conceived or transmitted the view that there was no human soul in Jesus Christ, who dwelt amongst them like any other man and experienced all the sentiments of man's soul, save those which are caused by personal sin. And St. John would assuredly not have shown the Word weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, had he not thought of Him as incarnate at the same time in the soul and in the flesh. So it is when St. Paul says that Christ emptied Himself, that is to say, divested Himself of the form of God to take the form of a servant. This statement about the *kenosis*, as it is called, cannot express an impossibility, like a real putting aside of the divinity. Scripture expresses divine realities. Is it surprising that language, crushed by the subject-matter, should at times be obscure, and that the expression of sublime truths should sometimes take on, under the light which floods them, a paradoxical aspect? Far from scrutinizing what is strange in these expressions, in order to extract therefrom a still stranger dogma, in contradiction with tradition, with the other sacred writers, with the writer himself, the Church understands them in accordance with the current teaching of the author. This has always passed for good method.

It is not a reason to neglect the modalities of expression, or the progress of thought. The rules of interpretation do not forbid our seeking to find out how Christianity developed with time in the

soul of St. Paul. This inquiry has given no marked result, as far as I know; but there is no objection to such study if it is not carried on in disregard of a principle that governs the entire process of interpretation. If it were allowed to take some of St. Paul's expressions in a sense which contradicts his usual teaching, we should be in presence not of development but of incoherence. We never allow of such an interpretation of the words of a reasonable man if there is any way to avoid it. Why should a St. Paul be made an exception?

We are not casting discredit on this method of the Church by calling it the method of average common sense. And as it is the method fitted to explain the doctrine of a society, it is likewise that which naturally emanates from a society. Assuredly authority in the Church belongs to one Head, the Pope, and to the pastors united with him, the bishops. But it is clear from history that the Head does not pass a definitive judgment except upon a recognized doctrine. While proclaiming, in virtue of his supreme authority, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX was pleased to recall " the constant sentiment of the Church, " *perpetuus Ecclesiæ sensus,* " the singular agreement of the bishops and of the faithful, " *singularis Episcoporum ac fidelium conspiratio.* All this must apply to exegesis, wherein the faithful are represented by the doctors, who are united to the bishops. In this understanding nothing excessive can prevail, nothing strange has any chance of success. Novelties are

not favored. It is incontestably true that progress in detail is not the product of the collectivity; a collectivity may show itself too indifferent in regard to such progress. For the official exegesis of the Church is one thing and the exegesis of scholars is another, although scholars cooperate in the official interpretation and depend upon the rules set for them. It is the current and normal difficulty of actions which mutually penetrate one another. Suffice it to say here that the hampering of personal initiative does not result from principles and that it may be obviated. There exists no difficulty in regard to the matter with which we are now concerned, the first principles of the faith, as the Church reads them in the Scriptures. Here she interprets as a society what was the doctrine of a society, a society which is none other than herself perpetuated in time; and no Catholic has any hesitation about following her.

And now let me state in brief, with no claim to completeness, and simply with a view to comparing the exegesis of the Church with the German exegesis within a given frame, what is, according to the Church, the meaning of Christianity. I do not risk a definition; I recall the facts and the conclusions.

The Church reads in the New Testament that Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead, using his power over nature in numerous miracles; that He was put to death and that He appeared to His disciples risen from the dead. The Church reads, again, that Jesus preached the reign of God, at times as

a divine intervention for the salvation of men, at times as a kingdom of eternal life prepared for the just.

She sees in the Gospels Jesus revealing Himself to His chosen disciples as the Messias promised to the Jews and dying for having claimed before the assembly of His people that He was that Messias, Son of Man and Son of God.

These disciples, to whom Jesus consecrated so much solicitude, were charged by him to continue His work after His death, with Peter at their head; and, in fact, they recruited a community of believers, with Baptism as an initiation, and the rite of the Supper, which united them to Jesus Christ; for the Master had, on the eve of His death, changed the bread and wine into His body and blood.

From all this the Church concludes that the first disciples of the Apostles formed a society mystically united to Christ by means of sensible signs which she calls sacraments; that another bond of union was the authority of the Apostles from whom the society received and under whom it guarded its faith. This faith was the firm conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God and one with the Father, and that in His death, unto which one is associated by Baptism (the exterior profession of faith), was found remission of sins. Christianity is, then, the work of Christ, carried on by the Apostles under the new form demanded by His departure. It has upon it the divine seal of miracles. It has the testimony of men of good faith.

Such is, in few words, the exegesis of the Church. Every man remains free to make or not to make the acts of faith which would be the legitimate conclusion of these premises. Have critics the right to say that the Church has badly interpreted the fact, or that Christianity is the result of an imposture or of a misunderstanding, or that the New Testament does not contain any miraculous narratives, or that these narratives are myths which arose long after the time of Christ, or that the new religion resulted from a conflict of doctrines which Jesus did not foresee, or that He did not even declare Himself the Messias, or that the intervention of God which He expected was confined in His mind to an imminent end of the world followed by an absolute reign of God, or that the new religion is a fusion of Judaism and Paganism, or that Jesus never existed?

Such are the successive positions of German exegesis, which we shall have to examine.

SECOND LECTURE.

THE FALSE MYSTICISM OF LUTHER.

We last spoke of certain general characteristics of the exegesis of the Catholic Church, as applied to the writings of the New Testament. We saw that this exegesis is that of a society which has the same point of view as the early Christians in regard to the supernatural; that its interpretations are always the same, and are the expression of a living tradition; that it rejects none of the books ascribed by antiquity to the Apostles and the disciples of Apostles, and interprets them as the writings of men who held one common doctrine of faith; that it never bases upon expressions which are obscure or of a paradoxical turn, dogmas contrary to the teaching of their authors; finally, that it represents the collective and accumulated wisdom of the ages.

Luther's method was totally different. The only doctor of the past centuries for whom he professed any regard was St. Augustine; and he studied him so little that he failed to understand him. No one could be more independent of former exegetes, or more personal; his exegesis was, in fact, based upon an individual state of mind. Contrary to the dictates of common sense, he made the new doctrine to rest upon a few isolated

expressions of St. Paul, interpreted in a mechanically proper literal sense which contradicts what the Apostle clearly teaches elsewhere. Once in possession of this scriptural support, he had no scruple about rejecting a book of the Bible if it did not agree with his construction of the Pauline doctrine; at least, he refused to be bound by its authority. Nothing, then, could be less synthetic than Luther's method. As for the living tradition voiced by the Catholic Church, that too must be put aside, since the whole Church had understood Christianity otherwise than himself.

Here, however, Luther stopped. He needed in his doctrinal system a supernatural authority that could be opposed to the authority of that Church against which he had begun war. Scripture was to be the firm foundation of the new faith; upon the Word of God he would take his stand. He continued, then, to admit, and he maintained with his usual vigor, the supernatural character of Scripture. He seemed, even, to enhance respect for the Bible when he proclaimed it the one rule of faith. This new dogma, however, made it necessary for Scripture not only to provide for its own defense, but to give forth its message so clearly as to impose its authoritative teaching upon the conscience of all. Another, contradictory dogma had to be set up. Since the Bible was not, as a matter of fact, clear enough to meet the Lutheran demand, as soon as the Church's official interpretation ceased every Bible-Christian began to receive a different teaching from the same divine book; nothing was left but to proclaim every

man's liberty to apply the texts of Scripture as he understands them, and the authority of the Bible resolved itself into the individual authority of each believer.

This is wher things were at the end of the Lutheran controversy. The Bible was the authority in theory, the individual was the authority in practice; and the system which presented this glaring contradiction was to affect the whole future of the Reformation. For Luther incontestably dominates the religious history of the greater part of Germany. He is the great German. A man who was for a few days chancellor of the empire, Dr. Michaelis, who is neither a pastor, nor a theologian (although he cannot be called a statesman either) well summed up the thought of his people when he exclaimed : " Who of us cares about the genius of Charlemagne? The genius of Napoleon is dead, that of Frederick has grown pale. Alone the genius of Luther has suffered no eclipse after four hundred years, because it is of heavenly origin and shines with a divine light. " [1] Germany, which is at present celebrating the fourth centenary of the Reformation, is not wrong in declaring herself the spiritual daughter of Luther. Another star of lesser magnitude, but whose centenary Geneva has recalled, Mme de Staël, had seen this very well, or had repeated it like a faithful echo : " Luther is, of all the great men whom Germany has produced, the one whose character was the

1. Cited from the *Journal des Débats* of July 28, 1917.

most German. There was something rude in his firmness, something obstinate in his conviction, and although he attacked certain abuses and certain dogmas as prejudices, he was not inspired by philosophical incredulity but by a fanaticism of his own." [1]

"A fanaticism of his own" is a marvelously apt expression. It is not only the character of Luther that is very German, it is still more his mind. And this is doubtless why it is so hard for a Frenchman to understand his success. For us, the last word on his doctrine has already been spoken by Bossuet. Very calm, because very sure that he was right, and very desirous to set off the reasonable points of the Lutheran professions of faith, because he did not despair of a reconciliation, Bossuet made it perfectly evident that Luther constantly contradicted himself, and that he changed positions only in order to defend himself, if not through a spirit of contradiction and to take the reverse of what was held by the Church. Hopeless of refuting the *History of Variations of Protestant Churches* modern Protestants have been satisfied to reject it altogether, or have endeavoured to make it serve their cause. Variation, some have said, is the very condition of progress and of life. A doctrine that does not vary is dead. It is because it is naturally capable of being adapted to the progress of the human mind that Protestantism is the religion of the future.

You have already answered that the only

1. *De l'Allemagne*, book IV, ch. II.

man's liberty to apply the texts of Scripture as he understands them, and the authority of the Bible resolved itself into the individual authority of each believer.

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to the publication of Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Father Denifle has been able to trace clearly the genesis of the Lutheran doctrine, and to add to the demonstration of contradictions an exposure of the heresiarch's ignorance of that scholasticism which he threw overboard with a light heart and a heavy hand. This indictment is crushing. It forces upon us the question whether there is not somewhere an idea which we have not grasped, or some event still to be brought to light, which would make us to understand Lutheranism better. As it is, we cannot at all see why Luther has had such influence. It seems impossible that one could mislead to such an extent, and for centuries, minds which we judged to be like our own.

But Heinrich, an historian of German literature, had warned us before 1870. He, too, said of Luther: "His error was, if I may so express myself, essentially German; it succeeded in getting accepted because it proceeded, in a way he did not realize, from certain tendencies of the national genius, and gave them freer scope."

"The French have ordinarily been poor judges of Luther, because they did not begin by making this indispensable distinction. They have rather judged him from a general point of view, as a Christian or as a theologian; they have called attention to the innumerable contradictions into

tary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans have been translated in a booklet called *Luther on the Eve of His Revolt* by the present translator. It is published by the Cathedral Library Association, New York. (Tr.)

which he fell; people have counted those dogmas of which he did think at first, and which he was brought to attack or defend without always appearing concerned to remain faithful to his own principles; finally, they have smiled, not without reason, at the very remarkable method which, to emancipate the human reason, begins by denying liberty. " [1]

There is nothing in all this to disconcert an intrepid German. Harnack likewise recognizes " the flat contradictions of his (Luther's) theology " [2] and says that " his conception of the Church became as ambiguous as his conception of the doctrine of the Gospel. " [3] He even admits the truth of the charge of opportunism : " He assumed, " he tells us, " a commanding air in theology, as a child does in the home, summoning forth old and new and always having in view merely the nearest practical end. " [4]

Nevertheless, there must be an innermost center in this new religion, in this German piety of which Germany is so proud : " Considered as a religion, " says Harnack, " the church (of Luther) offered before all an immense reduction, an emancipating simplification. This reduction meant nothing less than the restoration of religion : seeking and finding God. " [5] And the Berlin professor formu-

1. *Histoire de la littérature allemande,* I, p. 429.
2. *History of Dogma,* English Translation, Boston 1900. Vol. VII, p. 177.
3. *Ibid.,* pp. 231 f.
4. *Ibid.,* pp. 233 f.
5. In DENIFLE-PAQUIER, *Luther et le Luthéranisme,* IV. Apend'x, p. 75. Cf. *History of Dogma,* VII, p. 183.

lates still more explicitly the concept of the new piety : " The living faith in a God who, through Christ, cries out to the poor soul, I am thy salvation, the firm assurance that God is the Being on whom man may rest : such is Luther's message to Christendom. " [1]

It is perhaps all that modern German Christendom has preserved of Luther's message. If the formula is vague, — to such an extent that we could agree with it, — it at least suggests to us what is the soul of the Lutheran system. According to Luther, the meaning of Christianity is the certitude of salvation which each soul embraces by faith in that righteousness of Jesus Christ which is imputed to it. Every man is a sinner and remains a sinner whatever he may do; but if he has a firm confidence that God forgives him, he becomes righteous with the righteousness of Christ, which supplies for that which he cannot have.

You will grant that there is here a theory of mystic appearance; I shall endeavor to show you that it is not the mysticism of St. Paul. After that we shall again put ourselves, with more chance of arriving at a solution, the troubling question concerning the success of Luther.

It seems strange to you that such a subtle thought, in appearance of so little bearing on practical life, should be the main factor in a formidable shaking of consciences and in the persistence of Lutheranism. Do not fear to enter,

2. In Denifle-Paquier, IV, p. 78.

at this point, into a study of pure theology. After all, we are dealing with matters which affect the soul, and its destiny; and I shall try to avoid discussions of too technical a nature.

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To prove that St. Paul was not a Lutheran, I take my stand at once in the very center of the doctrine of the Apostle. He describes, in a well-known text, the meaning of the Gospel, that is to say, of Christianity : " It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. For in it is revealed the justice of God, going from faith unto faith. " [1] Luther at first saw in these words a threat to his distressed soul; he was frightened at the thought of God's justice. He was reassured only when he understood that the text refers not to the justice which punishes, but to the grace which pardons. The discovery would have been of importance, if, as the Augustinian monk wrote, " all the masters, with the sole exception of St. Augustine, have here explained the justice of God in the sense of the wrath of God. " But another monk, Father Denifle, took the trouble to read and reproduce on this point all the Latin authors he could find, printed or in manuscript. There are sixty-six; all agree with St. Augustine. The novelty was not, then, as Luther, in his ignorance of the masters, imagined, in declaring that the justice of God

1. Rom. I, 16 f.

which pardons is the meaning of Christianity, but in making of that justice something exterior to us, whereas, according to St. Paul, it is given to us gratuitously, to abide within the soul, when we embrace it by faith. Faith, the great Apostle taught, puts the Christian in possession of the divine power which had been placed at the service of the world by the passion and death of Jesus.

This grace which is given in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary, St. Paul affirmed, to all mankind. It is only by applying to themselves the fruit of a death endured in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire that men may be saved. How was this fruit to be made accessible to them? Pagans were, in practice, little concerned about morals when St. Paul wrote, but they still had a faint light in their conscience, the natural law; it was necessary to appeal to their conscience in order to stir it up to seek salvation. It might respond if salvation were proposed to them as something offered by God, with unquestionable signs. Those who were moved to seek salvation would recognize that they were sinners, and would have recourse to the grace of God. But the situation of the Jews, apparently much more favorable, was in reality more disquieting. Their law gave them a more clear-cut appreciation of good and evil, inculcating strongly a horror of sin; and, as far as our information allows us to judge, their moral condition was indeed much superior to that of the Gentiles, at least in sexual matters. But they doubtless exaggerated this superiority, and, to the exasperation of St. Paul,

they attributed the glory to themselves. They refused to confess their natural weakness. Every truly religious soul trembles before God because it is insufficiently pure and incapable of raising itself up with its own powers, and implores the help of God. The Jews had not this sentiment. In his uneasiness and his indignation St. Paul strikes very hard at the confidence of his fellow countrymen in their own works, which are, after all, not so very good; he declares them unable to resist evil with the powers of reason alone, even when it is illumined by the law of Moses; and he adjures Jews as well as Gentiles to give themselves up to the grace of God which is offered in Jesus Christ.

This reliance on the Savior was all the more necessary because man was no longer clothed with the dignity which the Creator had at first conferred upon him. By Adam's fault mankind was deprived of the original grace of innocence. Compared to the situation of man before the fall, this situation is a state of sin. According to the instinct of the men of his race, Paul personifies this sin, and, in the same way, he personifies as " flesh " all those tendencies of man which set themselves in opposition to the empire of God and to what is good. Now Jesus Christ is a new Adam, more powerful to help humanity than the first Adam was to do it harm. He has merited grace for us; but, as He is its source, we can have access to it only by uniting ourselves to Him by faith.

St. Paul's act of faith, the exterior profession of which is baptism, is an act of the intelligence which

recognizes Jesus of Nazareth as the Messias of the Jews and as the Son of God, as the Savior and Redeemer of men, and it is at the same time the adhesion of the whole soul to the salvation proposed by God.

And here there intervenes the mystical element. Mystical (another Greek word like exegesis) means remote from or obscure to the human mind, requiring a special initiation for its apprehension; it is said of a thing which is not revealed to the public, but rather kept secret from the uninitiate. It is now, ordinarily, reserved to the relations of the soul with God, relations which, by their very nature, elude a very explicit objective analysis. And as all our aspirations to God tend to draw us nearer to Him, even to unite us to Him, mysticism has essentially for its object divine union, such as it can exist here below. To know God is already to unite one's self with Him; to love Him is better to unite one's self with Him. But besides this knowledge and this love, which still allow of distance between the being which is loved and the loving soul, there is something like a contact with God, the possibility of which between spirits no one has a right to deny. The Catholic Church has followed in this matter the *via media* between the extremists who would refuse to admit any union at all, as tending to confuse the natures of God and man, and the other extremists who admit such a total union as to merge the human personality into the All of God. Keeping clear both of Deism and Pantheism, the Church aspires after a union which is perfectly real, so real that it will be

fruitful by the action of the Spirit of God in us.

This is what St. Paul saw in the act of faith and in Baptism. The sinner, united to the death of Jesus Christ, is also united to His divine life. He begins, then, to live anew. His works are no longer only his own; they are also the works of the grace of Jesus Christ who lives in him. Instead of boasting of his justice, he will henceforth confess that his justice is that of Christ. But he can lose this justice. For, if sin has disappeared and if the Christian is washed, purified, justified, the "flesh" remains, that is to say, the Christian still has tendencies which refuse to submit to the Spirit of Christ. The fight begins once more, but in conditions which make victory certain, if only the Christian fights with the arms of light. Far from being diminished, the person of man is magnified by association with the power of the Gospel. This power of the Gospel is spoken of when St. Paul speaks of the Spirit of God which acts in us; it is likewise in his mind when he speaks of a spirit which has become our own and which is a sort of enlightened and deified reason; it is what the Church calls grace or charity, grace when she conceives it as added to our nature, charity when she conceives it as the virtue which inclines our will towards God, towards moral duty, towards our brethren.

After this brief statement of St. Paul's teaching about union with God, let us now seek out the Augustinian monk in his cell. Luther was thirty-three years old. His name was not yet famous,

but already he occupied an important position in his order; and while giving himself up to preaching and to the teaching of Sacred Scripture, he took a passionate interest in the disquieting symptoms presented by the situation of the Church. There is no question but that it was from his powerful personality that the new system issued. Was it the conclusion of his studies, or the fruit of his personal experience?

He has himself excluded the hypothesis of mere study of texts. According to his own view of the matter, it was, indeed, from the Word of God that light came to him; but the prodigious effect of this new light was due to the fact that in it he recognized a view which he had already conceived as a result of the prostration in which he found himself and which he thus describes: "Notwithstanding the irreproachable character of my life as a monk, I felt myself a sinner before God, and my conscience was uneasy. Were the satisfactions which I offered to God sufficient to appease him? I had no certitude of it. So I did not love this just and avenging God. My conscience was troubled and I ceaselessly knocked at that passage of St. Paul, (Rom. I, 17), in the ardent desire to know what it meant."

It is in this disposition that he understood all at once (what all commentators had always taught) that the justice of God, which is the whole power of Christianity, is not the justice which punishes, but the justice which pardons. "Immediately," he says, "I felt that I was born again. It seemed to me that the door of Paradise opened wide before

me. Henceforth all Scripture took on a new aspect in my eyes." [1]

This remarkable result was not due merely to the fact that, with all earlier commentators, he perceived that St. Paul, in Romans 1, 17, was not speaking of an avenging justice; it was due to a new sense ascribed to the justice which pardons. Scripture changes its aspect for him when he thinks he finds in it the doctrine which was already his. So long as it resists him, he is tortured. The day he sees in it a soothing assurance for his soul in anguish, Scripture becomes not only a source of peace but a fulcrum with which he can move the world. Mr. Jundt is right, consequently, in regarding as the basis of the new system what Protestants call the moral experiences of Luther: "This system rests on the data of the individual experience of the believer, confirmed and completed by the testimony of Sacred Scripture," [2] such, that is to say, as Luther understood it.

What was, then, this experience, and how did the conclusion already drawn by Luther come to be confirmed by the authority of St. Paul?

Regarding Luther's state of soul one may make two hypotheses, that of a fall into mortal sin and that of scrupules.

According to Father Denifle, Luther, who had entered the cloister with a sincere desire to sanctify himself, succumbed to sin. Concupiscence (whe-

1. Jundt, *Le développement de la pensée religieuse de Luther jusqu'en* 1517, Paris, 1906, p. 71.
2. Jundt, p. 156.

ther that of pride or another kind) was stronger than he; and rather than confess himself vanquished through any fault of his own, the proud monk persuaded himself that his defeat was inevitable and necessary. This affirmation of the Austrian Dominican has been contested by a German Jesuit, Father Grisar. [1] It is not a rash judgment; it is supported by indications which are sufficiently serious. But God alone knows how the matter stood, as the Arabs say; God alone is judge, as Christians say.

Let us then suppose that Luther, as he always maintained, was only tormented by scrupules; that after having aimed at an excessively lofty holiness and resolved to be a saint, he could not stand the troublesome neighborhood of concupiscence. We may put aside the hypothesis that he gave sinful consent to evil tendencies, even though we must refuse to believe all the good things which he says of himself. For Luther delighted in describing his aims in regard to holiness, and as he always lacked moderation and tact, he draws what is evidently an exaggerated picture of his aspirations and achievements. Did he really, at this period, " allow himself to be admired as a being capable of miracles, able likewise to make but one mouthful of death and the devil ? " [2] One may doubt it; his correspondence at this date is not favorable to the view that he tells the truth about his extraordinary mortifications, for instance. But certain it

1. *Luther*, by Hermann Grisar, S. J., translated into English by E. M. Lamond, Herder, 1913, Vol. I, pp. 110 ff.
2. Jundt, p. 45.

is that he was under an illusion in regard to the rapid transformation which he expected of the religious life and of his own efforts. The erudite Father Denifle confirms the view that he was under such an illusion, and explains the fact. The doctrine of St. Thomas was then almost forgotten in Germany. The nominalists, with Occam at their head, had rather confused notions about grace and they overestimated the powers of nature. This is the degenerated scholasticism that Luther learned. He was made to hope for too much; he fancied concupiscence would soon be conquered. But it remained, even after he had just been at confession, to fill him with confusion and almost with despair.

" When I was a monk, " he will say later on, " I thought my salvation lost, if I experienced some concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say, a bad impression of sensual attraction, of anger, of envy towards a brother. I tried various means; I went to confession every day. But I made no progress, for the concupiscence of the flesh ever made itself felt again. I could not, then, acquire any calmness, and perpetually I was tortured by those thoughts : I have committed such or such a sin, or, Thou art a prey to anger; to impatience, etc. It is, then, in vain that thou hast entered into a holy order, and all thy good works are useless. " [1]

There is nothing in this experience but what is very ordinary, alas! What is strange is that Luther should have confused concupiscence and

1. Denifle-Paquier, II, 389, note 2.

sin. In theory he knew the difference; he must have been often told that concupiscence cannot stain the soul so long as the will does not consent.

But he was surprised at this persistence of concupiscence in so holy a state, attacking a soul that wished to be so holy. He finally understood that it would last as long as life (as is the case with every one) and he concluded that it was invincible. Invincible, in the sense of never quelled, that might be understood. But he meets a text : " Thou shalt not covet. " The law forbids concupiscence ! To experience it is, consequently, to commit sin. Concupiscence is, then, nothing else than sin, namely, original sin, continuing its life in baptized Christians, even if they are monks or in sacred orders.

The reaction, brutal, as one would have expected, exaggerated (that too was characteristic), the confusion that resulted, the anger against his teachers, all this ferments and boils in a passionate invective against those " pigs of theologians. " Through a delicate feeling for the fitting, the word is in German (*Sawtheologen*) in the Latin commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, written in the year 1515, in the cloister of Wittenberg. Luther bids these theologians reflect upon themselves, for " their own experience at least will show them the extreme foolishness of their opinion, will fill them with shame and remorse. For, whether they will or not, they experience in themselves evil desires. Then I say, Well ! Please go ahead ! Be men ! Put forth all your powers to keep these evil desires out of you. Try, as you say, with all your strength

to love God naturally, without grace. If you are without concupiscence, we believe you. But if you live with it and in it, already you fail to accomplish the law. For the law says, ' Thou shalt not covet, but thou shalt love God. '" [1]

Here we find ourselves, already, in presence of the chaos from which Luther will never emerge.

Concupiscence presents itself to him as a formidable power; it is the Lernaean hydra. And he is right. But he wrongly imagined that it is forbidden by the law, regarded as sin by God. He had suffered so cruelly because he could not be a saint; now he is condemned to live in sin. Hence irritation, bitterness and anguish. It is now that light shines in the darkness. Salvation issues from despair. It suffices to renounce one's own justice and to shield oneself from wrath behind the justice of Christ. What is the doctrine of St. Paul but the condemnation of one's own justice and the revelation of the justice of Christ?

There is, however, a difference! Let learned Germany pardon us, but it must be said (and it is really not unknown) that Luther, the exegete, had no historical sense. The monk does not take into account the historical situation and its bearing on the meaning of St. Paul's words. In the concrete case with which the Apostle was dealing, all was quite simple. The Jews, thinking their own justice sufficient, would not have recourse to the justice of Christ. Those, on the other hand, who were being baptized, implored it and received it; thereby

1. Ficker, *Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief*, p. 110

sin was effaced, and they became just. Now Luther (at least after he had received absolution) was in the second class, of those who had their sins forgiven, not in the class of the Jews who refused to believe. If he believed that his sin was not forgiven, he renounced a justice which would have been at the same time his own and that of Christ. He refused the gift of God, and nevertheless he appealed to the justice of Christ, on condition that it should remain external. His sin persisted, and he boasted of it; but it was covered. There was here matter for contradictions which were seductive for one of his peculiar frame of mind : he felt at once good and bad, just and unjust, a man in sin and a man received into God's grace. God imputes to the sinner the justice of Christ, without communicating it to him. Consequently he may sink into his nothingness, realize with complacency his lowliness, humble himself before God as no one else was able to do. Precious humility, inaccessible to those who consider themselves just! By giving up once for all that justice the very name of which " disgusts him, " he has found peace; for the justice of Christ is an unshakable foundation. It cannot fail one who believes himself, with confident faith, assured of obtaining salvation.

Gentlemen, I should not be surprised that you found this distinction between imputed justice and communicated justice a subtlety of secondary importance. If the merits of Christ are applied to us, what matters it, it may be asked, whether it be by giving us His justice or by taking His justice into account, instead of judging us what we are?

See, however, the consequences. If concupiscence is invincible, it is useless to try to withstand it. Whether we will or not we are established in sin, and, far from interfering with our salvation, it will rather lead us into a salutary humility; we will only be the more inclined to cover ourselves with the grace of Christ. Luther, for once, was perfectly logical in writing to Melancton the famous *pecca fortiter,* " sin with intrepidity. " The faith that will cover more sin is but the more heroic. Again, even more useless than the fight against sin, is striving after good works. This effort to do good becomes even dangerous. It is based on the error that one's own justice is something, that it may be increased; and one might fall into the abomination of regarding it as a means of obtaining eternal salvation. To merit life eternal by works of law! What would Paul say of this blasphemy!

Moreover, not only are moral actions discredited, but the will itself is declared so imperfect that it cannot avoid evil. For man, since he became a sinner, that is, since the original sin, is deprived of free will; his nature is irremediably corrupted, and baptism changes nothing in it.

As you see, a divergency which is hardly noticeable at the starting-point, leads to the wreck of morals. The effects answered to the cause so strikingly and rapidly, that Luther disclaimed responsibility with all his energy. He hastened, this time in a praiseworthy manner, to contradict himself. We do not think of reproaching Lutheranism with moral indifference; only it would be

desirable that Lutherans understood the inconsistency. But we shall not labor the point; for our theme obliges us rather to examine by what artifice Luther was able to attribute to St. Paul a doctrine so contrary to that which he clearly taught.

It is here that I need all your attention. Recall to mind that veritable triumphal chant which the Apostle entoned to celebrate the victory of the baptized person, who is washed in the blood of Christ, purified, and living with a divine life. [1] We should be inclined to say that he exaggerated the change wrought by baptism. All this no longer counts for Luther. He clings to a few words; he will not get away from them; they cut off for him the landscape opened up by the act of faith. For he has read in St. Paul, " It is not I who do it, " that is evil, " it is sin that dwelleth in me. " This is clear. Sin dwells in us, then. It does indeed! but when? Everybody knows, now, that St. Paul was speaking of the time when man has not yet embraced Christianity, when his reason struggles against the attraction of sin, without being able to find any help in the law of Moses. It is true that St. Augustine thought that the combat described by the Apostle was that which goes on in the baptized Christian; an error of interpretation which did not drag him into any doctrinal error. But Luther wanted his company; by a slip of memory or by perpetrating a wilful falsification, he makes him say that concupiscence is sin.

But this first indication must be supported. In

1. Rom. v, 1-11; VIII, 31-39.

the same Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul cites the Psalmist : " Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed the man to whom the Lord would not impute sin. " [1] These " covered sins " are a treasure-trove for Luther. God, he explains, covers them in order not to see them; they still exist, then, in man. Note that this term " covered " comes from a false interpretation of the Greek translators. The French Protestant Bible rightly translates, " sins pardoned. " And Luther was to translate the Bible from Hebrew into German! He should, then, have noticed this mistake. But, it may be asked, did not Paul assume responsibility for this expression? No, for in this context the sins that are covered are synonymous with iniquities which are forgiven. Paul would have judged monstrous this juridical fiction, or rather, comedy, of Almighty God covering sin in order not to see it. But Luther delights in these too literal explanations. A new proof that sin remains after the pardon he finds in the other psalm which says : " I removed his shoulder from the burden. " [2] Consequently, Luther solemnly argues, the burden remains, but the shoulder is no longer burdened with it. and made responsible for it, because God does not impute sin to the believer, though he remains a sinner.

And, lo! by a happy coincidence, alongside of the sin which is not imputed, Paul knows of a

1. Rom. IV, 7 f.; Ps. XXXI (XXXII), 1-2.
2. FICKER, p. 108. Ps. LXXX, 6.

justice which is imputed. It is that of Abraham, of whom Genesis says : " Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for justice. " [1] It was reckoned unto him; consequently God gave good measure. He accepted the faith of Abraham at more than its value, for justice! Consequently, Luther concludes, Abraham was agreeable to God by faith alone, without possessing justice. The Augustinian monk did not grasp the meaning of Genesis, which simply meant to tell us how agreeable to God was Abraham. He does not notice, either, that the Apostle was trying to take a weapon from the Jews by proving to them with a text received by them that Abraham, their father, found favor with God by faith, like the Christians, before having recourse to circumcision. Above all he refuses to hear the enthusiastic words of the Apostle on the gift of divine life which follows the act of faith and accompanies justification. No, he concentrates his attention on an isolated expression and draws from it a whole system. His " imputed justice " is, he claims, safer than the justice hitherto known. This being at the same time the justice of God and the justice of man, can be lost by man. But the justice of Christ cannot be lost, since one never really possesses it. Its imputation can always be obtained by faith, that is, by firm confidence. This faith-confidence is the necessary, but sufficient means of justification and salvation. No work is required; no work is of any value for salvation.

1. Rom. IV, 3 ff.

What! would charity be useless for salvation? Yes, for it too is a work, being the fulfilment of a commandment. For it is written, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. " Thus is completed the despoiling of the sinful soul; it no longer awaits salvation but from the Lord. It must be granted that Luther has written touching things on this theme of reliance on God and that his words have consoled many.

It is too bad that this comfort rests, again, upon a misunderstanding. For if Paul declared the law of Moses abrogated, it was as a provisional religious system, it was not as the formulation of the very principle of all religion, the love of God and neighbor. St. Paul himself had proclaimed a simple and emancipating principle : the whole law is included in this principle : " Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, " [1] which is properly the law of Christ.

Reduced as it is, the piety of Luther has nothing in common with what people used to call free-thought, and preferably to-day the enfranchisement of reason.

Rarely has reason been so ill-treated; and her interference in spiritual and divine things was never so abusively resented. I shall not repeat this abuse. Let us take note only of what caused the outbreak against reason. " Reason is contrary to faith. It is only for God to give faith, against nature and against reason, in a word, to make us believe. " [2] And not only did Luther crush reason

1. Gal. v, 14.
2. Denifle-Paquier, III, 275.

by faith; he would have reason annihilate herself. He sees no difficulty in a thing's being and not being at the same time. Every normal exercise of reason is for him childishness : " Let people leave aside those trifles and those human arguments which say, ' One and the same act cannot be agreeable and not agreeable, because it would be and would not be good. ' These are Scotistic subtleties which I cite to show how far they are from the truth, when they measure divine things by little human reasons. They would not speak so, if they were not ignorant of Scripture truth. " [1]

Persons who hold that mysticism is the aberration, or at least the total abdication, of reason, will conclude that we are now fully immersed in mysticism. We are not; nor shall we be when we take up his words on drawing near to Christ, which is the admirable and seductive feature of the rebel monk's appeal to souls. For, when looked at more closely, this mysticism is seen to lack the very essence of real mysticism; the veritable union of which St. Paul speaks is excluded as impossible here below. Unpardoned sins must be an insuperable obstacle to union (although they are covered), and the grace of Christ, exterior and extrinsic, does not bridge over the distance between the soul and God. Now, God is infinitely good and liberal. How has He not found the secret of enriching the soul in which he dwells? He is infinitely holy. How could he dwell with sin?

1. Denifle-Paquier, III, 285.

And if the soul is warned to be on its guard against works performed in union with Christ, it must be that the union is not real. For any union with God must be fruitful, and this is why St. Paul speaks with so much joy of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

We have said enough to show that Luther, instead of following the current of St. Paul's thought (a thought which does not always flow smoothly but which is ever recognizable), fixed on isolated words to formulate a doctrine which would solve the contradiction of his personal experience : his great longing for an assurance of his personal salvation, contradicted by the menace of a possibly victorious concupiscence.

Henceforward he possessed the criterion of all Scriptural truth. His exegesis, personal and subjective, ceased at the same time to be synthetic. He could not with decency both rest on St. Paul and openly reject part of his teaching. But the Epistle of St. James clearly preached good works. It was declared a " right strawy epistle. "

Tradition is upset at the same time. As Harnack has well put it : " In Luther's Reformation the old dogmatic Christianity was discarded and a new evangelical view substituted for it. " [1] The liberties taken with exegesis were not a sufficient manifestation of independence and his right over texts. Luther was pleased to add a word — only a little word — to the Epistle to Romans. St. Paul said, " We hold that man is justified by faith

1. *History of Dogma,* VII, p. 227.

without the works of the Law." [1] In Luther's translation we have: "We hold that man is justified without the works of the law by faith alone." "Alone" is added. The idea of Paul is, indeed, that faith suffices, without works, for the first justification of the one who is baptized; but by faith he understands the complete faith of the catechumen, who embraces Christianity with his whole soul. By putting in "alone," the translator appears to exclude charity. However that be, it is not a translator's business to change the text. His attention was called to the matter. His partisans hesitated to say that he was right. As for himself: "I beg you not to listen to the useless bawling of such asses about the word 'alone'; be satisfied with answering them, 'Luther so wills it and he says that he is a doctor above all the doctors of all Popedom. The word must remain in its place.' Henceforth, I wish simply to despise them, and to hold them as despised, so long as they remain what they are, that is, a pack of asses." [2] Evidently that settles it; there is nothing to answer.

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As a founder of a religion, Luther must hold his power from God. He did not fail to claim that he did: "I am certain that I received my doctrine from heaven." He must utter prophecies, and he uttered a solemn one: "Notwithstanding all

1. Rom. III. 28.
2. Denifle-Paquier, III, p. 190

the gates of hell and all the powers of the air, of the earth, and of the sea, my dogmas shall remain, and the Pope shall fall. God will see who goes down first, the Pope or Luther." [1]

The Pope still stands; but it is only too certain that Luther still dominates religious sentiment in the greater part of Germany. And perhaps you think, Gentlemen, that I have exaggerated! If truly the new religion of the Germans is based in its origin upon a series of misconstructions, how is that the Germans have not noticed it? or if they have noticed it, how can they so glorify Luther? This is the problem which we set ourselves at the beginning and which we cannot but take up, however inscrutable it may appear.

In the first place, even though Luther was not a correct and conscientious exegete, he was a man of powerful personality. It was precisely this personality, the vehemence of his impulses and the strange force of his imagination, that prevented him from following those common ways in which there is more likelihood of keeping in touch with the meaning of texts. Nowadays those German critics who are altogether independent of Lutheranism, have no hesitation in admitting that Luther did not understand St. Paul. Very inferior to Erasmus and even to Lefèvre d'Etaples as a humanist, incapable of any nice appreciation of the modalities of language and of thought, absolutely unacquainted with even the concept of historical criticism, Luther contributed to exe-

1. Denifle-Paquier, III, p. 486.

gesis only by eccentricities which should be recognized as baseless. But it is hard for most Protestant Germans to admit such things, or even closely to inspect their great man; they are not so scrupulous when it is question of Jesus Christ! But the genius of Luther was so completely in harmony with that of his race that he seems even to-day to be its accomplished type in the religious order. But in what, to be more definite, did Luther appeal to German dispositions and aspirations?

To this question there has been given an answer which I long held sufficient, which explains a great many of the facts, but which does not completely solve the problem. Heinrich, whom I have already cited, has recalled the words of Tacitus : " The German tribes do not dwell in cities, as is well enough known; they cannot even endure one another as neighbors. They cultivate isolated sections of land, the site of which is determined by a spring, a field or a grove that has appealed to them. " [1] So in Lutheranism. Its essential article makes it necessary for each one to believe that his sins are washed away by the sacrifice of Calvary. " Faith, " continues the same writer, " is reduced to a sort of mathematical point which leaves all the immensity of space open to the free conjectures of personal interpretations. All other dogmas and observances become a mere matter of special relations between the soul and God.

1. *De moribus Germanorum*, XVI : *Nullas Germanorum populis urbes habitari, satis notum est; ne pati quidem inter se iunctas sedes. Colunt discreti ac diversi, ut fons, ut campus, ut nemus placuit.*

It is like an individual contract in which each man stipulates for himself. The ancient independence of the German will, then, reappear in the religious life." [1]

This is very true, but there is something else. Once the outbreak of independence had been repressed, and harshly repressed, by the princes of Germany, Lutheranism congealed into a new orthodoxy, as jealous about its boundaries as the old, and the diverse confessions which depended on it isolated and grouped themselves in communities according to the place in which people lived. Each region had its religion and dictated it according to rather strict rules; the government protected religion because it became a regular part of the administration. There was presented, then, that spectacle, so strange to us, of very exact obedience to a prince, even in the religious sphere, practiced by communities which were very proud of their emancipation from Rome. In the time of Mme de Staël the contrast appeared curious; she explained it with her ordinary benevolence: "The enlightened men of Germany are keen about their privileges in the speculative domain, and bear with no hindrances therein; but they abandon rather willingly to the powerful ones of the earth all the reality of life." [2]

This is the picture of that dreamy Germany, which we believed idealistic like ourselves. We were inclined to take the poet of Schiller, who

1. *Histoire de la littérature allemande* I, p. 429.
2. *De l'Allemagne,* I. ch. II.

presents himself before the throne of Jupiter when all the good things of the earth are already distributed, as typical of the race. Provided it muses and thinks, what matters the reality of life? If this was a true picture in Mme de Staël's time, then Germany has changed. It is not how Germany has recently appeared to us. But it seems, rather, that she has always shown constant tendencies. It must be understood that we are not speaking of the race as possessing certain essential characteristics on account of descent, but of a group of peoples which practice certain special kinds of culture. That the culture of the Germans is different from that of other men, they have often enough said, and they are well satisfied that it should be so.

It would, then, be necessary to explain two contradictory tendencies, which they have always manifested and which they still manifest : independence as regards spiritual authority and punctual obedience to the sovereigns of the States, an independence which makes them so free as thinkers, and an obedience which makes them so perfect as functionaries. The reason is perhaps a sort of indifference, and it is not unjust to add, of incapacity, regarding abstract principles, and a very keen sense of the pratical advantages of discipline.

In fact, as Ozanam pointed out, the ancient Germans possessed in germ the same institutions as the Romans or the Greeks. Among them, as among the others, religion and law stood opposed to anarchy. But whereas the Greeks and Romans put order in their religions and caused law to

prevail over force, in Germany, " the rule bends under the stress put upon it by the effort of indocile imaginations and wills; we see this spirit of disorder, that is, of barbarism, prevail in religious matters, and Germany has never been able to rid herself of it entirely, " [1] and, in the sphere of law, authority yielded everywhere before the strivings of liberty. When the Roman said, " Let arms yield to the toga! " he did not mean that the fasces of the military leader were to be lowered before the eloquent talker of the forum, as his words are too frequently understood nowadays; he set in opposition law, as expounded and applied by judges, and the violence which seeks to obtain with arms what it deems right. We have here the whole difference between civilization and barbarism. The antagonism between authority and liberty has been found everywhere. In Græco-Roman societies, authority remained mistress of the situation; among the Germans it gave way.

If authority appeared victorious for a time, it was under the influence of Christianity, and the German who had not been Romanized resisted this influence as much as he could. He has, however, known how to practice obedience, and a very punctual obedience, which some regard as excessive. But under what condition? " The German, " Prince von Bülow has written, " by temperament, feels more at ease bound to little associations, than when arrayed in the vast national

1. *Les Germains,* I, p. 110.

union. [1] " Nevertheless, we should say, he felt at ease when he joined his superior to conquer the world, when he went down into Italy with Otho, thinking that he was taking the road to Byzantium to unite the two crowns, or when he pursued under the Hohenstaufen his dream of universal empire, when in our days...

The decisive point is not, then, the size of the association, great or small, a society for the exploitation of the planet, or a modest *Verein* to raise cabbage. The point by which the Germans are distinguished from other peoples is that they have less the abstract concept of the State than the very concrete notion of an object to be aimed at and of the advantages which are to be gathered. And, indeed, these visible and tangible utilities are more easily found in little groupings than in great states. This is why the German, ever ready to follow his military leader in fruitful expeditions, was ordinarily very careful not to allow him to encroach upon the liberties of the cities or little states in which he found his conveniences. There is in this German attitude, as Ozanam has remarked, a salutary principle of resistance to that encroachment of the State which may become a tyranny for souls. But has the independence of the Germans manifested itself, as did that of the first Christians, in a protest of conscience against oppression? I cannot see that it has; history shows us that they handed over to princes the administration of their churches. In this struggle

1. See *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, Feb. 1, 1915, p. 604

between liberty and authority, I would gladly congratulate them if, like the English, and like the Americans, they had held in check the usurping omnipotence of the State through a clear apprehension of the rights of individual liberty. But it seems to be the very concept of the State which was lacking in their case, that concept of the *res publica,* which the Romans conceived, Fustel de Coulange tells us, as "a constant and eternal being... a sort of monarch that was indiscernible, omnipotent, nevertheless, and absolute." [1]

Like the State, law had, even in free Athens, an absolute character: "One must do," said Socrates before drinking the hemlock, "what the city and country command, in war, at the tribunals, and everywhere." [2] Transfer this idea of law into the ecclesiastical sphere, and see what violent invectives it will call forth from Luther! If it were even question of a national power! But the power of the Pope has succeeded to that of Rome. To break with him, is to return to the liberty of the noble sons of Germania, — which noble sons Luther very brutally denounces within the family circle.

Thus, we believe, we may explain the action of the Germans in shaking off the yoke of a great spiritual power which they regarded as foreign. It went counter at the same time to their instinct for independence and to their utilitarian instinct.

This repugnance to grasp firmly what may be

1. *Histoire des Institutions,* I, p. 147.
2. *Crito,* XII.

called the dogma of authority, whether it be in the temporal or, especially, the spiritual domain, explains likewise why the doctrine of Luther appealed so strongly to the national temperament by its indifference about abstract ideas.

Germany is particularly satisfied with her philosophers; Kant and Hegel do not seem to her inferior to Gœthe, and Nietzsche used still to arouse enthusiasm after he had lost his mind. She claims to possess a feeling for the absolute and for depth, and opposes it to the superficial parcelling out of concepts after the manner of Plato, of Aristotle, and of St. Thomas Aquinas. I fear that this is a mere pose, a way to hide as best she can what is her most notable deficiency, namely, lack of acuteness. To see things in the absolute might very well signify to see things in the mass and in a general way; it might be predicated of one who lacks the keenness requisite to make necessary distinctions. I may here let Gœthe speak. He is the greatest genius of German literature, perhaps the only one who has really enriched the patrimony of mankind by the combination of Greek precision with the varied flexibility of German poetry. When he boldly transposed the words of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word," into the saying, "In the beginning was action," he did not change the eternal order of Truth, but he clearly revealed the deepest aspiration of his people, which is action. It used to be said in the Middle Ages that God has given the university to the French as to the more intelligent, empire to the Germans as to the more warlike, and I do not see that modern times have

to change this verdict on account of the wonderful achievements of the German universities, for, according to another saying of Gœthe, " The German is capable in matters of detail, but he is pitiable in dealing with the whole. " [1] It is another way of saying that he cannot easily rise to these universal reasons which are contained in the Word. And besides he does not attach much importance to such elevations of the mind. Another German, who was a very great man also, Lessing, will tell us that the search for truth excites in him much more enthusiasm than its possession. And were we carefully to study German philosophers, we should see their *ego,* the individual *ego,* the *ego* of the Prussian state, the *ego* of the German genius, make itself the center of the truth of things and the norm of justice. Without attributing to the whole of Germany, especially to that of other days, such extravagant pretentions, one must recognize at least the very personal character, we may say the subjectivity, which is in her appreciation of things. Hence results indifference or impatience in regard to objective dogma. Kant was very German when he gave up the effort to find God with pure reason, and gave Him back some existence with moral reason.

Now what Kant did for God, Luther had done for Christianity. He did not despoil it of all its dogmas; he upheld some of them very energetically, but for the reason that he, Martin Luther, had

1. Cited by Prince von Bülow, *Revue des Deux-Mondes,* Feb. 1, 1915, p. 613.

made up his mind not to be drawn beyond a certain limit. As a matter of fact he transferred the whole of Christianity into the moral sphere, and he even reduced it to the one point of the individual confidence of each man in his salvation. This is, as we have seen, what Professor Harnack calls an "emancipating simplification"; it is a simplification which is not the work of the genius who contemplates in a principle all the conclusions which flow therefrom, but a reduction to a minimum in the moral sphere, in which one takes refuge in order freely to discuss beliefs. And it is perhaps because of this vagueness that Lutheranism has shown itself absolutely unable to realize its religious thought in architecture, in sculpture, or even in painting, whereas its Bachs and Hændels have given it incomparable musical expression.

By his individual moral accent, by his religious sentiment which was deep, enthusiastic and poetic, by his rich and varied powers of imagination, by his almost creative action on his vernacular language, by his unwearied activity, his headstrong obstinacy, his rude polemics, his ribald realism, and also by his hatred of Rome, by his enfranchisement from troublesome observances, such as fasts and abstinences, by his plunder of the Church's wealth, by the rather vulgar mirth of his married ex-monks, Luther gained the heart of the Germans. Not to speak of divided Christendom, of the wars of religion which rent his country and ours, of the ruin of souls, must mankind regard him as one of its most powerful minds?

According to the opinion of most men, no one is a

really great genius who has not a clear consciousness of his work. I do not mean that he must dominate over the future, which is given to no one; but he must know what he is doing. Richelieu and Napoleon perhaps cooperated in the formation of modern Germany, but they knew the bearing of their actions, Richelieu in affirming the power of the State, Napoleon in organizing the Revolution. But did Luther understand that his personal interpretation of the Bible was founding freedom of inquiry, that he was destroying as much as it was in his power the religion which he loved and which he would restore to its primitive purity? He is the father of free inquiry, as Voltaire is the father of democracy. Voltaire is the father of democracy, which he detested, because, in playing like a capricious child, he shook that social order in which he was so much at ease. Shall it be said that these unconscious wreckers are truly great men? France does not say it of Voltaire, thank God. Germany can say it of Luther since she does not attach importance to the clear apprehension of concepts. It is enough for her that Luther led after him millions of minds, as others draw after them millions of soldiers. This is the judgment of the German Dœllinger. We expect another judgment of humanity. One point that is already perfectly clear is that Luther did not understand the texts of St. Paul upon which, as upon a solid foundation, he attempted to erect the new meaning which he gave to Christianity. But this point does not make any difference to the Germans. I ask myself, have they sufficient esteem for the truth?

THIRD LECTURE.

THE ACCUSATION OF IMPOSTURE BY THE DEISTS

I. Dogmatism of early Lutheranism; the era of Pietism; the rise of Deism.

Luther's rebellion against the Church caused in Germany, as might have been anticipated, an outbreak of religious and social anarchy. But ideas never triumph completely over an established order to which many interests are attached. In France, for instance, after the revolutionary tempest had subsided, a new social order was demanded by those who had benefited by the overthrow of fortunes, and it was based largely upon the traditions of the old *régime*. The very simple reason is perhaps that a group of men cannot live together in peace without conforming to certain principles.

In the XVI century very subversive doctrines were heard for a while among Luther's countrymen. Hans Denk (d. 1528) taught that Jesus was only the ideal man; [1] a forerunner of Hegel, Sebastian Frank (d. c. 1542), declared that our nature is

1. Vigouroux, *Les Livres saints et la critique rationaliste*, I, p 449.

divine and that the absolute being, which is inanimate, realizes itself in us, who are the "actuality of God." [1] These voices, however, were isolated and they were soon silenced. In Italy a radically changed Christianity was professed by the Socini; and the denial of Christianity by Giordano Bruno, though subtle, was real. Here, indeed, upon the classical soil of Italy, the pagan renaissance had developed more distinctly than elsewhere its naturalistic consequences. But in Germany, despite Luther's alliances with the humanists, — temporary leagues entered into for political purposes, — the Reformation was rather a reaction, mystical in appearance, of the old Christian faith against the emancipation of reason. Moreover, and this is almost a sufficient explanation even when taken alone, the rulers of Germany did not conceive it possible that a country could live without religion; and religion for them meant the religion of Christ. It is one of the merits of the school of Durkheim to have demonstrated, after a far-reaching inquiry, what we already knew, namely, that every religion must have a social form. This applies to the Catholic Church, which is herself a society. Instead of remaining in this Church, which God had made capable of containing all mankind, Germany, giving way to her taste for little unions, divided up into departments to practice once more a religious life which she considered simplified and nearer to primitive Christianity, and

1. Vigouroux, *Les Livres saints et la critique rationaliste*. I, p. 452.

which was to prove a mere transition toward unbelief. Whilst other countries adopted more completely evolved forms of Protestantism, Germany clung to Luther. Her theologians set themselves the task of defending his formulas; and nearly everybody seemed satisfied with those meetings in which hymns and instrumental music favored a dreamy exaltation of the soul. A literature came into existence; Paul Gerhardt is its most characteristic representative. It was sincerely Christian, inspired by the passion of Christ, but very narrow in its outlook. A St. Bernard in his solitude of Clairvaux was attentive to all the interests of Christendom. Paul Gerhardt, as Heinrich tells us, " has in view a small group, bound together by close ties, a parish, of which he would make but one family, and, so to speak, but one soul. " [1] Little churches replaced the Church.

The only confederate authority binding these little churches to one another was that of Holy Scripture. In appearance the authority of the Word of God was enhanced. Since it was the rule of faith which demands the submission of every reader, its very letter must be the work of God. Lutherans found in the Church belief in the inspiration of the Holy Books; far from diminishing this belief, they manifested a tendency to make the action of God more exclusive of any real human authorship.

The Church professed then, as she does now, that the Bible has God for its author, that the teaching

1. *Hist. de la litt. all.*, I, p. 488.

of its human writers is also the teaching of God. Some theorists had thought to make this notion clearer by comparing the sacred writers to musical instruments played upon by the Holy Spirit; to Him alone would belong the melody and the accord. This comparison, like most comparisons, may suggest untrue ideas. One who imagines God using the inspired person as a fluteplayer his flute, is apt to think of an Isaias or a Paul as a sort of phonograph. The main current of the Church's tradition has always preserved the personality of the inspired writer and assigned to him functions of a real author, who exercises his faculties in full liberty under the enlightening and guiding action of God. To know what God teaches us, we must determine the thought of the human teacher. This, we have seen, is the task of exegesis, if we take the word in its strict sense. The ever recurring difficulty of exegesis consists precisely in finding out in Scripture what is taught.

Since the days when St. Augustine applied his genius to the task of showing the harmony of the Evangelists, the Church has always admitted that this agreement was in ideas rather than in words. Commentators have often maintained, without incurring any official blame, the identity of facts related in quite a different manner in different Gospels. They have applied, more broadly than St. Augustine, the principles of St. Augustine, namely, that we should not look for verbal harmony and that the variations of the Evangelists are to be explained by a reference to their general aim. The first period of Lutheranism, far from showing

any progress in this direction, shows, on the contrary, a backward movement. Luther, we have said, saw in Christianity only the trustful relation of the sinful soul with God. He had no concern about facts. Neither had his immediate successors. Unrestricted import was given to every text, regardless of consequences. According to Osiander (1498-1552), one must always multiply events which the Evangelists seem to assign to different times, no matter how alike their circumstances may be. If several evangelists do not place at the same moment the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, it is because she was raised several times. [1] Likewise, by adding up the denials of St. Peter, one gets eight denials of his Master, instead of three.

But while Protestant dogmatic theologians were thus outbidding their Catholic opponents, their flock, (if we may still speak of a flock when there are no true shepherds), indifferent concerning such subtleties, sought in Scripture only the consolation promised by Luther in the name of the Holy Spirit.

We are apt to pass too rapidly over this stage of Protestantism, when following the history of the progress of free enquiry. It is the era of Pietism, which intervenes between early Lutheranism and the complete emancipation of reason. It would never have occurred to Luther to trust the powers of individual reason to interpret the Bible. He had promised his followers that the Holy Ghost

1. Schweitzer, p. 13.

the Author of Scripture, would make them relish and understand it. This was a necessary condition if His written Word was to be an infallible guide; otherwise, each reader would understand it in his own way. But, in fact, each reader did so understand it; the Holy Ghost, then, did not intend that the Bible should be the immediate rule of faith. The existence of varied, idiosyncratic interpretations and the assistance of the Holy Ghost granted to individual interpreters, so clearly exclude one another that one wonders how otherwise logical thinkers have been able to hold at one and the same time the Lutheran view of the part of the Holy Ghost in the interpretation of Scripture and the right of individuals to adopt whatever views they like about the meaning of Scripture. Examine, for instance, the logic of the preface which Magny wrote for his translation of the Lutheran book of Tennhard : " The principal purpose of the Sacred Scriptures is to make us fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Now, in regard to particular truths and to particular means for reaching eternal salvation, it is well known that everybody explains Scripture as he likes; and most people endeavor to give it a sense which adapts it to their prejudices... For this reason we need another interpreter, an infallible judge. " Do you think he is going to draw the inference that we must have an infallible Church and a Pope? Listen to his conclusion : " We need an infallible judge who is above Scripture, and who has Himself dictated Scripture, namely, the Spirit of God, who, by His light and by His interior

teaching, alone can give clear and certain understanding of the real meaning of Scripture and of Christ's institution, and lead us in all truth. [1] "

This is not absolute nonsense; there is an idea back of these seemingly incoherent statements. To realize that there is, you must try to get the viewpoint of the Pietist. Magny means that we may understand Scripture as we like so long as we are within the realm of dogma; but that the Holy Spirit inspires each individual, when he reads the Bible, to practise the moral virtues, virtues which the Pietist still calls Christian.

Pietism had already pervaded Lutheranism at the end of the XVII century. Dogmatic controversies no longer interested the laity; and in the countries where the Church's voice was no longer heard every one made up his own little religion. This expression of the English Fielding is adopted by Madame, Duchess of Orleans, who was a German [2]. We must not suppose, however, that the Pietists understood that this freedom in religious matters meant for Teutons all that it suggests to the Latin mind. Creeds were no longer powerful enough to govern the intellect; people no longer believed what was contained in the professions of faith drawn up for their little groups; but no one assumed the right to leave his group. The outward structure was maintained, though it was understood that there was no such thing as exterior

1. Cited by Masson, *La Formation religieuse de Rousseau*, p. 70.

2. Masson, *ibid.*, p. 68.

authority in matters of doctrine. The Lutheran Churches became disinterested in what relates to the intellectual sphere; they concerned themselves only about morals, the lessons of which are contained in the Bible better than in any other book. This predominance of morals over dogma may be called the essential characteristic of Pietism, provided we keep in mind that we are speaking of a pious system of morals the upholders of which were voluntarily and socially attached to Christianity.

It is from Germany that Pietism penetrated into Roman Switzerland; there it affected, more or less, the strictly Calvinistic orthodoxy of Geneva, the Protestant Rome. Masson thought the ideas of Madame de Guyon an adaptation of Pietism upon French soil; it would have been connected with Germany through Switzerland. However, the *Moyen Court* of Madame de Guyon had a particular flavor; it was still sufficiently imbued with Catholicism to deceive Fenelon. But it is, at any rate, from Germany that sentimentalism, what was known as " the theology of the heart, " came to France. Rousseau, who was repelled by Calvinistic orthodoxy, and who possessed a remnant of Latin logic notwithstanding his yielding to a predominant sentimentality, carried Pietism to its consequences; the Gospel " spoke to his heart " and he retained hardly more than " the holiness of the Gospel, " a sincere admiration for the person and for the moral doctrine of Jesus Christ together with an uneasy and inconstant ardor for perfection, such as he understood it.

Now whilst Protestantism, driven from France as a religious community, came back to it in such a rationalistic form as to arouse protests from the very attenuated Calvinism of the time, the influence of France and England was winning in Germany adherents to a radical hostility to Christianity.

It is in England that Deism was born. The French precursors counted for little; the work of Bodin [1] was never printed. It occurred to no one in France that Descartes, with his imperious need of seeing clearly in all things, tended to make reason the supreme judge of belief. And Bacon had already enunciated the principle that "the only authority is reason enlightened by experience." [2] It remained to be said openly that reason sufficed to found a religion, a natural, very simple religion, which all men might and should embrace. This step was taken by Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, whom Father Vigouroux rightly regards as the father of Deism. He taught in 1626, at the very time Descartes was publishing his *Discourse on Method,* that there exists a supreme God, that He must be the object of a worship. He appeared thus to establish a religion, that is to say, a bond between God and man; but he immediately severed any visible tie between them and at the same time all union between Deists, by restricting this worship to virtue and piety. And, though he did not say where the norm of right and wrong might be found,

1. *Colloquium* ἑπταπλοῦμερες *de abditis rerum sublimium arcanis.*

2. Liard, *Descartes.*

he encouraged the practice of what was right and the avoidance of what was wrong, by upholding belief in the rewards and the punishments of the future life.

In time (it took a long time) people perceived that this system is anything but a religion. For, as I shall likely have occasion to repeat frequently, a religion is, of its nature, a social institution. What was called natural religion was not, then, a religion; it was the philosophical state of mind of isolated individuals who could not unite in any worship. The most independent critics agree with our old apologists concerning the absolute sterility of this form of religious sentiment, or rather of this rational conclusion which is devoid of sentiment, — except in so far as it is a survival of Christianity. The comparative method allows one to classify this system and to go back to its origins. It is a manifestation of the exaggerated individualism which issued from the Platonic Renaissance. The genius of Plato — after that of Socrates — recognized the supreme value of the intelligence. But no sufficient account was taken of the nature of the human intelligence, united with a body, and developing in the midst of a society. The human monad, or more simply the individual, incontestably has his personal destinies. It is the glory of Platonism to have emphasized this in admirable language. But the human individual is born in a social group and depends on it. The modern Deists, unmindful of this fact, resolutely placed the individual in presence of God, and took for granted that he had sufficient power to know and serve

Him. Now, without perceiving it, they attributed to reason what their reason had, as a matter of fact, received from their Christian education. They had learned from the Christian faith to believe in a personal God, in the immortal soul, in justice making itself felt after this life. And reason can, indeed, demonstrate the existence and the immortality of the soul; she can conclude from these two notions that there will be retribution after death. But the reason of individuals does not always arrive at the truths which reason can reach, and the convictions upon which Deists agree scarcely ever are influential except when they are transmitted in a society and guaranteed by divine authority. While excluding revelation, Deism claimed to retain as the teaching of reason what was essential in the ancient faith, and since it did not and could not form a church after rejecting worship, it precludes the possibility of transmitting these essential truths which reason does not reach without sustained effort, nor without a mingling of error. Deism cannot, without self-contradiction, form even a family religion, since the autonomy to which the child is entitled forbids imposing belief upon him, even to the tenderness of a mother's love.

The fortune of Deism in France was due to Voltaire. This simplified, apparently very precise, religion retained threats of judgment for the rabble, and did not oblige one to contact with the rabble; in this it suited Voltaire. Why was he more rabid against the sentimental Deism of Rousseau than against the materialism of Holbach or of

Helvidius? Because his intransigent rationalism could not bear even the appearance of revelation. A man of superficial mind and unfeeling heart, he preferred to the emotion of the Gospel the mechanism of the Great Clockmaker. The system was simple and clear; it was absolutely devoid of religious sentiment; it answered in France to that innate taste for clear-cut ideas which Descartes had rendered more exacting; and it did not go counter to science, the pretentions of which were ever more arrogant. At the time people might think that irritation was increased by the fact that the Voltairian polemics met in France the Catholic established religion; but we have in our day seen the same sort of sectarian violence upheld by the government. And in reality governmental protection of religion did not prevent the public diffusion of the most virulent attacks against Jesus Christ and His Gospel. This bitter warfare had long been carried on in the conversations of the Philosophers, and Rousseau, disgusted with so many platitudes and such lack of understanding of the heart, had opposed to it the " Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Curate, " when it broke out with fury in 1760.

I cannot bring myself to read to you the blasphemies uttered by Voltaire against Our Lord Jesus Christ. (He did not speak much more favorably of the French nation.) But since we are here dealing with the meaning of Christianity, I shall quote Voltaire's friend Desmarais, who, in 1765, published his " Analysis of the Christian Religion " : " This proud edifice is but the work

of a few dishonest and ignorant men, who, like the founders of all religions of the earth, took advantage of the credulity of the people, to plunge it into the most shameful superstition. " [1]

Boulanger, in his " Researches concerning the Origin of Oriental Despotism, " had already, in 1761, attacked human errors, priestly impostures, popular follies. [2] And Voltaire himself, as M. Masson so well puts it " believed himself sufficiently equitable if he recognized that in all great religious enthusiasts, there was perhaps 'good faith' in their first 'dreamings,' but a good faith which finally ended in 'necessary imposture.' " [3]

These words are enough to characterize the tone of the Voltairian polemic against the Sacred Books, which were judged by Voltaire (!) to be shameless books.

II. Lessing and Reimarus propose to Germany the Deistic explanation of Christianity.

Is it not strange that these unreasonable insults, the most outrageous ever made against our divine Lord, should have come from Deism, — a poor remnant of Christianity, — and from thinkers who believed themselves the organs of Reason? But we have not to examine here cavillings and coarse jests which disfigure French literature. It is in

1. In Masson, III, p. 15.
2. Masson, III, p. 25.
3. Masson, III, p. 22.

Germany that we must study the activities of Deism. On its arrival from France, it drew from his dreamy mysticism the light-souled Wieland. But that which really gave it force in its new surroundings, was that it there found what it had not in France, an adept who had gone deeply into the study of the New Testament, the orientalist Reimarus [1], and, moreover, a publisher who was capable of wielding with dexterity what might otherwise have appeared to the public only complicated erudition, Lessing, the leading philosopher and man of letters in Germany at the beginning of the classical period. [2]

Comparisons are misleading. Nevertheless I see no better way to introduce Lessing to French readers than to compare him with Voltaire. The German Voltaire, it is generally said, is Henry Heine; but the emotion and the dreaminess which mingle with the scepticism of this German Jew are sufficient to make the comparison unsatisfactory. Lessing is more like the French scoffer. Like Voltaire he lacks feeling and true poetry. Like Voltaire he brought philosophic discussion into the drama. It is true that he had not Voltaire's lightness of touch. He made over into

1. Hermann Samuel Reimarus, born Dec. 22, 1694 at Hamburg, where he was professor of Oriental Languages, died in 1768.

2. Gotthold Ephraïm Lessing, born Jan. 22, 1729 at Camenz in Lusatia, died at Brunswick, Feb. 15, 1781. He is here quoted according to *Lessing's Sämmtliche Werke*, herausgegeben von Richard Gosche, Berlin, 1882, 8 vol. in-8°.

methodically arranged little apologues the fables of Lafontaine. But he is enamored of free thought and the rights of reason, and, as does the friend of Frederick II, he " willingly dispenses with patriotism. " [1] However, he is a believer in German *Kultur*, to the point of declaring that there is no French dramatic literature, especially no tragedy; [2] and he is deeply German in his unconcern about objective certitude. Voltaire held to Deism. Lessing holds especially to being free to seek. His words in *Eine Duplik* have often been cited : " If God with all truth in His right hand, and in His left the single, unceasing, striving after truth, even though coupled with the condition that I should ever and always err, came to me and said, 'Choose', I would in all humility clasp His left hand and say, 'Father, give me this, is not pure truth for thee alone ?' " [3]

This was not merely a whim. One of Lessing's editors — an admirer — sees herein the device of

1. Letters to Gleim, t. VIII, p. 174 : " I have no idea of love of country (I am sorry to have to confess what you will perhaps regard as shameful), and it seems to me to be at most an heroic weakness, with which I willingly dispense. "

2. Ich denke nämlich dabei... dass auch die Franzosen kein Theater haben. It is true that frightened by his audacity, he adds : kein tragisches gewiss nicht (*Hamburgische Dramaturgie*) ! But Corneille and Racine are still forgotten !

3. Wenn Gott in seiner Rechten alle Wahrheit und in seiner Linken den einzigen immer regen Trieb nach Wahrheit, obschon mit dem Zusatze, mich immer und ewig zu irren, verschlossen hielte und sprache zu mir : « Wähle ! » ich fiele ihm mit Demuth in seine Linke und sagte : « Vater, gieb ! die reine Wahrheit ist ja doch nur für dich allein ! » *Eine Duplik*, t. VII, pp. 286 f.

his whole life. It might well be that of his country. French tact would have omitted the words, " Even though coupled with the condition that I should ever and always err, " for what can a search for truth be that is condemned to reach only error? It is indifference associated by a strange contradiction with passionate glow; it is research for the sake of research; the aimless turning of a treadmill, the Sisyphus-like task of forever rolling to the top of a steep hill a stone that always rolls down again. We may now understand Lessing's attitude towards Christianity. That of Voltaire is more clearly definable : it was pure hypocrisy. He went to communion at Easter to keep out of trouble with the police, and that at a time when the police was inclined to let delinquincy in such matters go unnoticed. Lessing, on certain days, upheld Protestant orthodoxy. He maintained, with Leibnitz, the eternity of punishment; he defended the dogma of the Trinity against the Socinians. In this — whatever his panegyrists may say — he certainly was not sincere. He put himself forward as the defender of the old dogmas simply because the old dogmatic system, which he regarded as powerless, was less distasteful to him than a rejuvenated Christianity, which might become threatening. There is in his position something of the attitude of the Maximalists of the left, who support the Maximalists of the right, in politics or in religion. Lessing seems to me to have expressed his whole mind in a letter to his brother, in which he was all the more frank because he felt free to indulge in a bit of coarseness.

The old orthodoxy is " dirty water, " but modern theology is " liquid manure. " " We are agreed on the point that our old religious system is false, " but at least it is not like the new system, a patchwork produced by bungling half-philosophers. Up to the present, there has been a partition between religion and philosophy. Each has kept to its own department. Now, " under pretext of making of us reasonable Christians, they make of us altogether irrational philosophers. " [1]

There is some truth in the words. Haphazard compromises between faith and the opinions of the hour — such as is Modernism — are no more congenial to reason than to faith. But Lessing's words make it clear that his adhesion to Protestant orthodoxy was a simple matter of opportunism. Christianity, to the historical titles of which he did not do justice, appeared to him as the necessary school of the moral truths. " Whether the legend be true or false, " he said, " the fruits are good. " And, here again very different from Voltaire, Lessing resolutely defended morals, morals binding on everybody, and not only on common people. It is for this reason that he has been regarded, though wrongly, as the father of liberal Protestantism. He leaned much more towards Deism and even, at the end of his life, towards Pantheism. He looked upon Christianity as a provisional form of religion, destined to disappear, rather than as indefinitely perfectible. He did not deny that the biblical teaching has been in the designs of God a

1. Letter of Feb. 2, 1774, t. VIII, pp. 479 ss.

sort of education for the human race; but he held that henceforth reason was sufficient by itself, at least for clever people. But, nevertheless, oscillating once more, instead of appealing to pure reason in preaching the law of love, he evoked the testament of St. John, " My little children, love one another. "

Such was, as I understand it, the mind, — uneasy, agitated, solicitous about moral preservation, but dominated by a passion for free inquiry, — which dared to propose to Germany the Deist explanation of Christianity.

Lessing did not, however, assume full responsibility for the system. He employed the rather discreditable manoeuver of publishing as an ancient work by an unknown author well-selected passages of a voluminous attack on the religion of Christ by a celebrated orientalist, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, who had died at Hamburg in 1768. The book was called an " Apology for the reasonable Worshippers of God. " [1] The manuscript, of four thousand quarto pages, is still preserved in the library of Hamburg. No admirer has been able to secure the publication of the whole work. The author seems to have foreseen, more clearly than Lessing, the harm his apology for the Deists was apt to do Christian consciences. It was the realization of this danger to others that caused him to refrain from giving it to the public; he expressed in his preface the wish that it be known only to a few persons.

1. *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes.*

He was — we may be sure — restrained by no reverence for the cause he assailed; he was animated by real hatred of Christianity, a characteristic, as we have seen in France, of the more convinced upholders of natural religion. It is probable that Lessing never knew Reimarus personally; but Reimarus' daughter, Eliza. whom he knew, communicated to him the most important parts of the treatise. As librarian to the Duke of Brunswick, at Wolfenbüttel, he was not subject to censorhip when he published the manuscripts of the Wolfenbüttel collection; so it was as a Wolfenbüttel fragment that he gave out, in 1774, a first selection of Reimarus' book. He not only claimed to have found it in his library, but, to avert suspicion, he said that the paper had probably been written about thirty years before, and possibly by a certain Schmidt, who died at Wolfenbüttel in 1749. [1] This preface reveals a mediocre care for truth.

The first fragment, entitled " Tolerance due to the Deists, " did not produce much of a sensation. More emotion was manifested on the appearance of the five fragments which followed in 1777 : first, " Of the Declamations of the Pulpit against Reason "; second, " Of the Impossibility of a Revelation to which all men can accord solid Faith "; third, " That the Books of the Old Testament were not written to reveal a Religion "; fourth, " Remarks on the Crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews "; fifth, " The Story of the Resurrection. " The scandal reached its height when there appeared

1. Vol. VII, p. 116.

in 1778 the last fragment of the unknown, " Of the Design of Jesus and of His Disciples. "

These facts are very well known. They have been set forth by Father Vigouroux, with his usual exactitude, in " The Holy Books and Rationalistic Criticism. " [1] But people do not agree concerning the value of Reimarus' elucidations. According to Father Vigouroux, " Many false and impious explanations of the life of the divine Savior have indeed been discovered, but nothing more odious or more miserable has ever been imagined than the explanation of Reimarus. " [2] Strauss, of whom we shall speak later, regarded Reimarus as a precursor. In the book which he consecrated to him in 1860, " he contrasts the thoroughly German attitude of Reimarus with the French manner, which he finds more witty than serious; he even ventures to prefer German silence to the French grimace. " [3] Schweitzer is still more enthusiastic : " This writing is not only one of the greatest events in the history of the critical spirit; it is at the same time a masterpiece of the world literature. " He adds : " Seldom has hatred been so eloquent; seldom has derision been so magnificent; but seldom, too, has a work been written in the justified consciousness of so absolute a superiority over the views of the time. " [4] We do not wholly understand what magnificent derision

1. Third ed., vol. II, pp. 404 ff.
2. Ib. p. 418.
3. *David-Frédéric Strauss*, by A. Lévy, p. 197, note 3.
4. Schweitzer, p. 15.

(*grossartiger Hohn*) may be; and we doubt whether Reimarus or any other German has equaled the bitter irony of Pascal or the malignant *finesse* of Voltaire. [1] But we must grant that Reimarus was no more odious than our own Deists; and it must be said to his credit that he abstained, in regard to the Apostles, from manifestly injurious epithets. He leaves it for the reader to draw his own conclusion. Though this conclusion can be, in the mind of Reimarus, only a condemnation, and though he carefully prepares the verdict that Christianity is the result of an imposture, we can feel grateful to him for not being satisfied with epigrams and facetiousness. He tried to show that the imposture with which he charged Jesus and His Apostles was intelligible in their historical circumstances; it is by this attention to history that he was really ahead of his times. Voltaire rejected Christianity in the name of reason; Rousseau was touched to the heart by its holy morals. Neither of them studied it as it appeared in its historical setting. Reimarus understood that he had to take its surroundings into account in working out his system. This system we shall briefly sketch.

Jesus claimed to be the Messias, and His disciples preached Him as such. What did people then

1. Heinrich, III. 370 : " Everything seems heavy in Germany, men, things, and the language itself. That does not exclude either force or grandeur, but it prohibits that light mockery which is allowed only to supple and nimble minds like ours... To raise the heavy covering which a complicated language has put over their mind, the Germans have only two powerful levers, mysticism and fancy. "

think of the Messias? The Gospel does not say. One must, then, seek elsewhere for the idea the Jews had of him. The study of contemporaneous Jewish literature reveals two sorts of messianism. The greater number followed the old tradition, and closely connected the Messias with the political restoration of Israel. The expected Messias was to be a second David, a victorious king, who would deliver his people from the power of the Romans and give it back prosperity with independence. Jesus had this political conception. Believing Himself the Messias, he tried to draw the people into rebellion. He proposed indeed, to better the moral life of the Jews; but He brought no new religious idea. His ideal was the practice of the Law, better understood. He thought only of the Jews, whose king He hoped to become. He used dissimulation, both by interpreting the texts of the Old Testament in His own favor, and by false miracles destined to seduce the crowd. Les distrustful of the crowd than Renan, [1] Reimarus

1. " Let a wonder-worker present himself to-morrow with sufficiently serious credentials to deserve discussion; let him announce himself able, say, to raise a dead man. What would be done? A commission composed of physiologists, of physicians, of chemists, of persons experienced in historical criticism, would be named. This commission would choose the corpse, assure itself that the death was real, designate the hall where the experiment was to be made, regulate the whole system of precautions necessary to leave no chance for doubt. " M. Victor Giraud (*Revue des Deux Mondes,* March. 1, 1918) has recalled that the exigencies of Renan had been formulated by Voltaire " It would be desirable, that a miracle might be well verified, that it were performed in presence of the Paris Academy of Sciences, or the London Royal Society, and of the faculty

thus lays down the conditions of a miracle which might be accepted as genuine : " If one single miracle had been wrought by Jesus publicly, in a convincing and undeniable way, before the whole multitude on one of the festival days, men are so made that all would have yielded Him allegiance. "

The Hamburg orientalist cannot, however, deny that the healings of Jesus were real miracles in the eyes of His contemporaries; that they stirred up their imagination. Jesus, he tells us, thought He was about to realize His ambition when He mounted the ass, to fulfil the prophecy of Zacharias. The people cried Hosanna to the son of David. But when the grand council, feeling itself menaced, took the necessary steps, Jesus died, abandoned by all and believing Himself abandoned by God.

Not much genius was required to explain things in this way; but it was evidently not an explanation of the origin of Christianity, since all ended on the gibbet. In the system of Reimarus, the new religion begins only after the death of Jesus, and it is here that a second aspect of messianism intervenes.

Since the prophecy of Daniel, the Jews expected directly from heaven their deliverance and their empire, with the person of the Messias. A supernatural being, manifested upon the clouds, the Son

of Medicine, assisted by a detachment of the guard, to hold back the people who might, by their indiscretion, prevent the performance of the miracle. " (*Dictionnaire Philosophique*, article *Miracles*). — In both texts we find the same insolence, but Voltaire is less pedantic and less heavy.

of Man, was to appear in the glory of God. This heavenly existence and this lightning-like apparition might be combined with the concept of the Messias, the son of David : why not suppose that, after a human existence, the Messias would have a second, glorious coming?

This hypothesis, which Reimarus wrongly takes to be an opinion of the time, was, he tells us, a flash of light and salvation for the Apostles. They were completely discouraged at first by the passion and the death of the Master; but it seemed to them too hard to renounce a dream of glory and to take up again their painful occupations. The friends of the Messias had lost their taste for work during their wanderings. They had found by experience that the preaching of the kingdom of God feeds the preachers. Sent forth by their Master without purse or scrip, they had wanted for nothing. Charitable women had provided for their support. Others would be found. Why should they not, to continue such a life, attempt a slight-of-hand trick? They stole the body of Jesus, hid it, and announced that He was risen and that He would come again soon. Prudently, they allowed fifty days to pass before making this declaration, in order that the corpse, if it were found, might not be identified.

If there had then been at Jerusalem a system of police worthy of the name, the Disciples could not have perpetrated the fraud nor set up a community. But the police force of Jerusalem was really asleep. They did not stir even when Ananias and Saphira, who had gone to the Apostles, came out of their

house only to be buried, and when the nascent community seized their goods! [1]

It is assuredly piquant to maintain that Christianity would not exist, if only the police had better attended to its duty; but the police was not really altogether deserving of these reproaches, and if it was at first a little negligent, eventually it so acted as to convince the Apostles that all was not sunshine in the preaching of the kingdom of God.

They persevered, however, Reimarus goes on, and easily deceived simple souls, both by promising the establishment of the temporal reign in the near future and by representing Jesus' death as a means of deliverance from sin. Their imposture is continued in our day by the hypocritical art of the theologians. These theologians know very well that the coming of Jesus was foretold for the first Christian generation and that this coming never took place. Here we have the whole case. Christianity was founded upon deceit, and it still rests upon a conscious lie.

III. The Deistic portrait of Jesus and the Apostles satisfies no one.

By this view concerning the prophecy of the last things, the system elaborated in the XVIII century anticipates the so-called eschatological explanation, which we shall take up in its turn.

1. Acts, v, 1-11.

This is what explains the enthusiasm of Mr. Schweitzer. To-day we shall judge only the system proper to Reimarus. And it may be said that it has already been condemned, and finally, by all the exegetes of Germany. It is probably on account of this detestable accusation of imposture that the name Deist is in such bad odor in that country.

Reimarus' exegesis was very new, and nevertheless, by its narrowness, it resembles the exegesis of Luther. But whilst the heresiarch's conception of Christianity was determined by the needs of his own uneasy soul, Reimarus was able to construct a system more historical in appearance. Lessing has a reflection which naturally recurs in this connection : " We Germans do not lack systematic books. Just give us a few verbal explanations, and we can draw therefrom anything we like. In this we are more expert than any other nation in the world. " [1] In Reimarus' case, however, the attempt to explain Christianity on the theory of a conscious imposture on the part of Jesus and of His Apostles was not the indulgence of an uninformed imagination. He deliberately studied the whole Gospel and explained it all on the hypothesis of deliberate fraud.

How could this learned investigator of texts spend long hours in reading and re-reading the words of our adorable Savior without being touched by the incomparable moral beauty of His soul? How could he fail to perceive the evident ingenuousness of the Apostles, and the tone of absolute

1. *Laocoon,* preface.

sincerity which characterizes their words? No Hellenist was ever so stupid as to charge the Antigone of Sophocles with duplicity. But this ideal of the human being who exposes himself to death for duty's sake, was reality in the Apostles. They were simple and straightforward, ready to die for their convictions. And they are accused of stealing a corpse in order thereafter to live upon public credulity!

Such a charge could only come from a grovelling soul. A Deist should have understood that to revile such saints is to blaspheme against God. Strauss, even, has understood that divine morals are incompatible with the more than equivocal conduct attributed to Jesus and His disciples. Criticism, be it said to its credit, has given up this hopeless hypothesis. When critics nowadays refuse to believe with the first Christians that the Apostles saw the Risen Lord, they admit, at least, that they thought they had seen Him. Their good faith is beyond suspicion. And what shall we say of their Master!

But if it were necessary to examine the theory suggested by the two ideas of messianism, it would be easy to show that Reimarus wrongly understood their application. It is very long after the Ascension of Jesus and the spread of the new faith, that we meet in Jewish writers a trace of the concept that the Messias was to come twice, once in lowliness and a second time in glory. And absolutely no one before Jesus, at least as far as we know, had found the secret of uniting in one person the attributes of a suffering and glorious Messias. The

Scripture passages which predict a suffering Messias, [1] had not been understood. [2] In regard to the two kinds of messianism which did exist, each with its characteristic features of temporal glory and of heavenly glory, awaiting the divine solution which facts were to bring about, the evident error of Reimarus was to invert the situations and to attribute to Jesus the ambition to play a political part. If the Gospel deserves any credit at all, it is the people who await a political Messias; even the Apostles are at first ambitious to reign with Him; Jesus, for His part, strives to raise their hearts to higher things, towards the clear atmosphere of the love of God, by preaching confidence in Providence and charity to all, even enemies. Whence had this Reimarus drawn hatred for Christianity so blinding as to assign to the disciples the rôle of the Savior and to the Savior the rôle of the disciples, in spite of history?

The XVIII century, more capable of bold, impudent philosophical negations than of historical reconstruction, felt nevertheless that Reimarus' attack was unjust. It recognized in this charge of fraud stayed up by a false theory of history, a deliberately sacrilegious attack. The scandal was very great; but such sensations do not always serve as a means to propagate evil.

The refutation of the system came from two sides. The so-called scientific theology, that is, the compromise between orthodoxy and a very

1. In particular Isaias, LII, 13-15 and LIII.

2. On the suffering Messias, unknown to ancient Judaism, see *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs* (150 B. C. – 200 A. D.), by the present author, pp. 236 ff.

advanced type of criticism, was represented by Semler (1725-1791). This Halle professor, then illustrious, took up for refutation one after the other the affirmations of Reimarus, as Origen had done in the case of Celsus. He reproached him with having failed to do justice to the spiritual character of the teaching of Jesus, and the scholars of Germany agreed with him. Reimarus, who had no precursor, had no disciples.

It was natural enough that Lessing should have come in for his share in the attacks against Reimarus. Gœtze, the first pastor of Hamburg, was then on very good terms with him; their common friends saw the source of this intimacy in the excellent red wine of the good ecclesiastic. The publication of the anonymous fragments had the earmarks of a sly attack. Gœtze took up the defence of the Bible against the Unknown. Lessing himself was supposed to be the author of the Fragments; at the very least he had assumed very grave responsibility. The pastor was not sufficiently well equipped for the encounter, it must be admitted. But I cannot tolerate the comparison of Lessing's anti-Gœtze writings to the *Provinciales* of Pascal. Pascal was mistaken, but he was in good faith. Was Lessing even serious when he affirmed — very solemnly, indeed — that he had been actuated by a desire to provoke a refutation of Reimarus? The good apostle found it impossible to remain under the same roof with the Unknown [1]!

1. Semler has dealt with Lessing's case in a pretty good apologue : " Before the Lord Mayor of London, a man was accused of starting a fire. He was seen coming out of the basement of the burning house. 'I came,' said he, ' into the

He hoped some one would answer his difficulties and deliver him of his perplexity! For the rest, the work was rash, too noisy for Lessing's taste, and at any rate premature. Christianity had good in it, as a provisional system; one should not give it up too soon. It should have at least the benefit of the doubt. It is doubt that Lessing wished to arouse; he did not desire an adhesion to too raw a negation.

We can sympathize somewhat with Lessing when he points out, with malicious pleasure, the contradictions in which the Lutheran exegetes were involved: "If, sir", he says to the principal pastor of Hamburg, "you carry things to the point where our Lutheran pastors become our popes, prescribe when we are to leave off studying Scripture, limit our researches and the publication of what we have found, then I shall be the first to change our little popes for the Pope [1]."

And perhaps, indeed, he might have accepted the authority of the Pope after the manner of

granary of my neighbor, and I found a lighted candle which the domestics had carelessly left there. It would have burned down to the floor during the night and set fire to the staircase. That the fire might break out in the day time, I threw a little straw over the flame. The fire was at once seen coming out of a dormer-window; the firemen rushed to the scene, and the fire, that would have been dangerous during the night, was immediately extinguished. 'Why', asked the Lord Mayor, 'did you not blow out the candle?' 'If I had, the domestics would not have become more prudent. But after all this fuss they will be careful.' 'Strange, very strange', said the Lord Mayor. 'He is really not a criminal, but his head is gone.' And he shut him up in a lunatic asylum, where he is still." (SCHWEITZER, 15 f.).

1. VIII, 745.

Voltaire, who dedicated his " Mohammed " to Benedict XIV. He would, however, have found it embarassing to send to Rome his " Nathan the Sage, " in which he affects to put on an equal footing Christianity, Judaism and Islamism. It is, in fact, with Lessing that German literature breaks with the Lutheran church. Klopstock, the pious singer of the Messias, died only in 1803. But already his poem was regarded as tedious; Gœthe was reigning and causing paganism to reign. Schiller, an ardent and elevated soul, was a Deist and a spiritualist; he was no longer a Christian. In that same year, 1803, Herder died. He was a mystic by temperament, with a sufficient love for the beautiful to have a taste for the poetry of the Bible; though at first a convinced Christian, the new prophet of history had become a Deist, rather in the manner of Rousseau, it is true, than in that of Voltaire. Schiller, who heard him preach when he was a pastor at Weimar, saw in his sermon only a " sensible talk, a moral lesson which could have been given in a mosque just as well as in a Christian church. " [1] But this was not enough. This great Herder, whom Germany still admires as one of her historian-thinkers, conceived the idea of a book on the " Genius of Christianity, " which would have been the history of the alterations of the primitive thought of Jesus, conceived of as a stranger to all external worship. He had the project of presenting all the feasts, the temples, the rites, the consecrations, the literary composi-

1. *Letter to Kœrner,* in Heinrich, II, 364.

tions of Christianity as the "muddy contamination of a pure fountain-head." [1] And nevertheless, in 1802, Chateaubriand was giving to a delighted France his "Genius of Christianity, or the Beauties of Religion."

But Herder may figure here only for his evangelical studies. [2] He had known Reimarus at Hamburg. However, his enthusiasm for the Prophets and for the religious genius of the Orient, forbade his treating the Gospel like a police story. He continued to speak of Christ in magnificent language, without adoring Him. He saw in the Gospel an epic told under the influence of the Old Testament. By this suggestion, and by the contrast which he drew between the three first Gospels and the Gospel of St. John, he seems, says Mr. Schweitzer, to join hands with Strauss. The time was not yet ripe. Before Strauss made his radical attack on the Gospels German exegesis tried to apply to them the naturalist hypothesis proposed by the rationalism of the "Enlightenment."

1. "*Idea on the Philosophy of History*", Bk. XVII. ch. i. in Heinrich, II, 564.

2. *Vom Erlöser der Menschen. Nach unsern drei ersten Evangelien* (1796). *Von Gottes Sohn, der Welt Heiland. Nach Johannes Evangelium* (1797).

FOURTH LECTURE.

THE VIEWS OF ENLIGHTENED RATIONALISM.

The period from 1778 to 1835, between the appearance of the Wolfenbüttel Fragments and that of Strauss' much more destructive work, "The Life of Jesus," was relatively tranquil; its typical exegetes and exegetical systems are not sensational; nor are they of much interest, except for the student of German psychology.

What is called the age of the Enlightenment in Germany is that of the ascendency of the Wolffian philosophy. At that time Germans spoke of the *Aufklärung* as though the sun had arisen to dispel the northern fogs and herald the advent of great advancement in thought and civilization; it was compared to the Renaissance, which had followed upon the darkness of the Middle Ages. Nowadays no body even in Germany shares this illusion; the Enlightenment is not spoken of without a note of sarcasm. People realize that the age was that in which Rationalism was supreme; and no Germans of any school of thought wish to be called Rationalists any more than they wish to be called Deists. Their terminology here requires attention. With us, Deism is only the pseudo-religious conclusion of Rationalism when it deigns to solve in the affirmative the question of the existence of God;

and Rationalism is the philosophy of all those who reject revelation. In Germany, on the other hand, both Deism and Rationalism are now terms of reproach even with those who refuse to believe anything which is not within the domain of reason. For them " Rationalism " is a thing of the past; and it really is, if considered as that shallow rationalism of which Wolff was the initiator.

The philosopher Christian Wolff was a disciple of Leibnitz and a faithful repeater of many of his lessons; but he possessed neither the penetrating intelligence nor the religious feeling of his master. He set himself the task of breaking the windows of Lutheran orthodoxy and letting in the rays of " enlightened rationalism "; he engraved the rising sun on the cover of his books. His philosophical ideas were superficial but clear; this was against their ultimate triumph. Germany does not insist on philosophy being intelligible, but she wants it deep. Her real prophet is Emmanuel Kant, who arose in the East about 1750. It may be that the unpopularity of rationalism as she first knew it is due to the feeling that it came to her from without, and that it is contrary to her temperament, at least when it is plain-spoken. At any rate she early repudiated the old rationalists' confidence in reason.

What is German in German Rationalism is that it was rarely logical in its consequences or frank in its manifestations. All the writers of whom we are about to speak really believed that Christianity, which they did not wish to renounce, is of value only in virtue of its conformity with reason.

While Catholics see that Christianity teaches what the human mind can know about God, ourselves, and our duties; while they see in this correspondence of the teaching of Christianity with the teaching of reason and conscience a proof of its divinity, they see, at the same time, that Christian dogmas transcend reason. They submit to this transcendent teaching because it is guaranteed by the testimony of Jesus Christ, whose mission was accompanied by prophecies and attested by miracles. Rationalism did not wish to accept Christian dogma, nor prophecies and miracles as a proof of the supernatural; but at first it did not wish openly to reject Lutheran dogmas or Biblical prophecies and miracles. It was so pleasant to float along on those undisturbed waters in which were reflected the old *Burgs* of the Fatherland! To retain this tranquility it was not necessary to be a real believer; one might keep the old words for one's sermons, and only change their meaning. This was the first stage of German Rationalism. The second disengaged itself more completely from the traditional formulas; in the story of the life of Christ a romantic mystery was substituted for the supernatural of the Gospel. In the third stage, with Paulus, Rationalism became a perfectly coordinated system, expounded with entire sincerity. But this sincerity brought to light its initial falsehood, and the shallowness of its exegesis when applied to the Gospels, documents which had not merely a supernatural coloring, but were wholly conceived in the supernatural. It was feared that there would be a rupture between orthodoxy and

Rationalism; a divorce seemed about to be pronounced. But at this point Schleiermacher proposed a conciliation which permitted concord to be preserved in a semiobscurity. In this fourth stage Rationalism went down into the depths of the soul and wrapped itself in the sentiment of the infinite.

These four modes of exegetical rationalism produce, then, four episodes which lend some variety to its rather monotonous history. Keep in mind that we shall proceed from unconscious confusion to compromising clarity, to plunge finally into a region of deliberate confusion.

I. Jesus the most enlightened representative of enlightened reason.

The first rationalists, now almost forgotten, had their days of glory. They were not, indeed, men of genius, but they possessed that brilliancy which best reflects the tendencies of a period, for the reason that they have little but what they receive from their environment. Such men are powerless to create; but they are faithful echoes. And answering echoes prove that they have given back to the public what they had borrowed from it.

As illustrative of the first period, I shall take only the name of Volkmar Reinhard. [1] He has left

1. Born at Salzbach in 1753, died in 1812. According to Schweitzer, the way was opened, in 1768, the year of the

thirty-four volumes of sermons, which are spoken of in histories of German literature. Heinrich says of them : " His sermons are still cited as a model of logic, of perfect order, and of taste; his 'System of Christian Morals' abounds in thoughts expressed in strong and sober language, and his 'Confessions' are a fine, delicate analysis of the human soul. " [1] After he had been for fourteen years Docent at Wittenberg, he became in 1792 Senior Chaplain to the court at Dresden. He published in 1781 the work with which we are here concerned, " Essay upon the Plan which the Founder of the Christian Religion Adopted for the Benefit of Mankind. " This volume of five hundred pages had a fifth edition as late as 1830.

I know the work only by the analysis of Mr. Albert Schweitzer. The conclusions of this critic are really very strange. This is the first : " With all his philosophising and rationalising certain pillars of the supernaturalistic view of history remain for him immovable. " [2] And this is the second : " For him the one circle of thought (that which concerns the natural) revolves freely within the other (that which concerns the supernatural),

death of Reimarus, by Johann Jakob Hess, " *History of the Last Three Years of the Life of Jesus* ", 3 vols., 1400 pp., first edition in 1768-1772; seventh edition in 1823 ff. Of like tendency are Ernest August Opitz, preacher at Zscheppelin, " *History of Jesus with a Delineation of His Character,* " 1812, and John Adolphus Jacobi, superintendent at Waltershausen, " *The History of Jesus for Thoughtful and Sympathetic Readers,* " 1816.

1. *Hist. de la litt. allemande,* II, 294.

2. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* p 31.

but they never come into contact with each other."[1]

Were it question of a Latin, I should say that the preacher understood that these two circles of thought are incompatible, that only proper decorum prevented the Senior Court Chaplain from openly attacking the supernatural. And even in the case of a German, this is the most probable explanation. But Mr. Schweitzer, a radical, opines that he was in good faith. He is in no wise astonished by the contradiction. And we must, indeed, always remember that it is possible for two contradictory propositions to exist at the same time in these brains. I am not blaming them; I am rather looking for attenuating circumstances in this peculiarity of the German temperament. Let me quote to-day what is said of this national trait by M. Pierre Duhem, an admirable Catholic scientist who has just been taken from us: "To place in the number of axioms a proposition which is formally self-contradictory, then to draw a series of corollaries, is a delicious exercise for a geometrical mind, which disdains niceties and common sense." This was, says M. Duhem, the case of the precursor of modern astronomy, Nicholas Cardinal of Cusa: "To serve as a basis of the edifice which he was to raise, the German Cardinal laid down this affirmation, the contradictory character of which is manifest: In every order of things, the maximum is identical with the minimum. Then, upon this foundation, the deductive method per-

1. *L. l.*, p. 34.

mitted him to construct a whole metaphysical system." [1]

What has taken place in the sciences may throw some light on the history of exegesis; all the more that here all is much easier. It suffices to speak like theologians about inspiration, revelation, and miracles, while reducing these notions to such proportions that they can be accepted by the enlightened reason. And this is what Reinhard undertook to do, even in regard to the soul of Jesus, even in regard to such very human sentiments as fervor and enthusiasm, which he deemed unworthy of a cool and collected sage: "Can any man who knows anything of the human mind conceive of visionary enthusiasm and enlightened reason united in a single soul?" [2] Now enlightened reason was predominant in the soul of Jesus. He proposed to unite morality and religion by the bond of love. Moral instruction was the principal content and the very essence of all His discourses, for his religion was nothing but the exercice of reason. And since no great man of antiquity before Jesus had devised so beneficent a plan for the whole human race, Reinhard could conclude that the founder of Christianity is "the uniquely divine Teacher." [3] What mattered after that if the Senior Court Chaplain continued to speak of Jesus in the language of the Protestant professions

1. "Some Reflexions on German Science," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Feb., 1, 1915, pp. 671 and 672.
2. SCHWEITZER, p. 33.
3. SCHWEITZER, p. 33.

of faith? Enlightened reason recognized in Jesus merely its most enlightened representative. And what mattered if he spoke of miracles and even related miracles? He had given warning : " All that we call miraculous and supernatural is to be understood as only relatively so; it implies nothing further than an obvious exception to what can be brought about by natural causes, so far as we know them and have experience of their capacity. A cautious thinker will not venture in any single instance to pronounce an event to be so extraordinary that God could not have brought it about by the use of secondary causes, but only by direct intervention. " [1] This is saying with sufficient distinctness that the miracle is only the unexplained; it is " disintegrating the notion of miracle from within. "

But Reinhard had the tact, and the prudence, not to explain too much. Like all who admire in Jesus only the moralist, he made too little of His messianic rôle. The reign of God which He willed could only be a moral institution. Not only was His plan entirely independent of politics, but He never based His claims upon messianic descent. To raise Jesus Christ above temporal concerns, the " enlightened reason " of Reinhard disfigures and diminishes Him. While giving Him an outlook upon the whole world and rightly denying that He was aiming at the foundation of an earthly kingdom, it disfigures His concept of the reign of God on earth as in Heaven.

1. Schweitzer, p. 32.

Jesus becomes, in this system, the founder of the reign of reason : " It would be impossible to show more conscientious respect and a more delicate consideration for the rights of human reason than is shown by Jesus. " [1] Reinhard doubtless attributed his own program to the Master. Now Jesus was not an eighteenth century rationalist. I will not say, as some do, that He trod reason under foot; but it is clear that He did more to give birth to faith than to accomodate faith to the reasoning reason. What became of faith in this new system, of that faith of Paul rediscovered by Luther? How reconcile such commonplace morality with the spirit of sacrifice required by Jesus? What did Reinhard substitute for the ancient dogma? How did he harmonize the symbolical view of Baptism and of the Eucharist which he attributed to Jesus with Lutheran doctrine? As we have already said, Reinhard did not feel himself obliged to answer such questions directly. It was enough tacitly to dispense his readers from faith in the supernatural. At bottom, he was equivocating. No one thought of blaming him for it; it was the fashion. Men could not refuse to accept light and culture; but it was deemed unnecessary to upset the old Christian edifice and openly to renounce dogmas, since a man could accept these dogmas in the sense that appealed to himself. Why cease to speak of revelation? Reason was in its way a revelation. Jesus remained the " unique Master, " the same communion cups continued to be used.

1. Schweitzer, p. 34.

the Bible was piously read as a source of excellent morality and particularly of charity.

II. The activities of the Essenes explain the mysterious element in the Life of Jesus. Bahrdt and Venturini.

There were, however, especially in the beginning of this period, some minds which could not accommodate themselves to this equivocation, nor check their intellectual curiosity about the origin of Christianity. The fine discourses of such preachers as Reinhard about the ethics of Jesus did not explain how things had taken place, especially as regards the Resurrection. People hardly believed that Jesus had been raised up from the dead (though they still said so), and nevertheless they could not believe that His disciples had become graveyard thieves. Anyhow, the disciples were incapable of such fine moral teaching; this must be the proper work of Jesus. What, then, had happened? It was not enough to depict Jesus as a rationalist of the end of the eighteenth century; it was necessary to interrogate history, as Reimarus had done, and, since the imposture hypothesis was too shocking, to find another solution.

The solution which was imagined was strange; the " Lives of Jesus " which were built up about it belong to fiction of the dime-novel variety. It would be hard to conceive how it had entered into an " enlightened " mind if we did not remember

the extraordinary impression produced by those superlatively " enlightened " persons, the first Freemasons. We can forgive Bahrdt and Venturini when we think that the great Gœthe himself was very much impressed. I understand that his book on " The Years of Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister " is more admired on faith than read. It is, nevertheless, a masterpiece, even among the works of Gœthe. Wilhelm undergoes hard experiences, but he thereby becomes wise. He is less moving, but more attractive, than the neurasthenic Werther. Now, how does it come about that, after having brought his hero through so many adventures, Gœthe, the realist, conceived the notion of initiating him into Freemasonry, as a source of sublime and mysterious teaching? How is it that the author of so many exquisite songs, the poet of Mignon, organized for his heroine the funeral of a lay worship? His burial service, borrowed from the Greeks, is certainly ridiculous when the Greek faith is left out. The unlikeliness of the end makes one forget the youthful grace and the captivating naturalness of the beginning. My point is not that the masonic novel of Gœthe served as a model for Bahrdt's fictitious Life of Christ; Bahrdt wrote in 1784-1792, while the first part of " Wilhelm Meister " appeared only in 1796; I merely mention Gœthe's romance as a very clear instance of a tendency of the time to exaggerate the action of secret societies, or at least to attribute to them in the past the activity which they manifested just before the French Revolution.

It is nothing less than an explanation of Chris-

tianity by the influence of a secret society in the time of Christ that is given by Karl Friedrich Bahrdt in his " Explanation of the Plans and Aims of Jesus, in Letters Addressed to Readers who Seek the Truth, " in 11 volumes, embracing 3.000 pages.

The Freemasons of the days of Jesus are the Essenes, divided into three classes : The Baptized, The Disciples, The Chosen Ones. It is the Chosen Ones who appear in the garb of angels. The Order deceived the people, but for their own good. It was necessary to break the spell of political messianic expectations, which were dangerous for the nation, and to raise the people to a religion of reason, useful for all mankind. Jesus was trained by these Essenes. When He was but a child they read to Him the story of the death of Socrates, and He longed to emulate the martyr-death of the great Athenian. But to enlighten His fellow-men and to promote their welfare, He had to deceive them by false miracles. A mysterious Persian revealed to Him at Nazareth two secret remedies, one for affections of the eye, the other for nervous disorders. On His reception into the highest degree of the Society of the Essenes, Jesus offered to die if need be for the good of the Order. But He hoped to be rescued by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were in the plot. All was, indeed, so organized that He ran as little risk as possible. He was taken down from the cross in time, left the tomb alive, pretended to ascend into heaven, appeared to St. Paul, and continued to direct the nascent community.

You ask from what kind of unbalanced mind this romance came forth. It came from a man whose heart was corrupted, at any rate; Bahrdt was excluded from teaching on account of immorality in 1766. However, permission to teach at Halle was afterwards given him by Zedlitz, a minister and friend of Frederick II, and he had nearly nine hundred pupils.

The theme outlined by Bahrdt was dealt with more fully by Karl Heinrich Venturini, in his "Non-Supernatural History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth," in 4 volumes embracing 2.700 pages, which had two editions, in 1800-1802 and in 1806. Of him Mr. Schweitzer assures us that "his life was blameless and his personal piety beyond reproach." Nevertheless the Duke of Brunswick did not dare to authorize him to teach. He was only a pastor of the holy Gospel! Again we meet with the repulsive imputation of fraud; Venturini excuses the Master, on the ground that his miracles had an ethical purpose, were designed to lead the Jews to a higher morality. And what miracles they were! wrought with the help of a "portable medical chest!" At the marriage-feast of Cana, Jesus provided wine which He had brought with Him as a wedding-gift, and had put aside in another room. If St. John said that He changed water into wine, it was perhaps because he had been "the least thing merry himself," and had believed in the miracle with the rest.

However, the Jesus of Venturini, more courageous than the Jesus of Bahrdt, really faced death on the cross; and He did nearly die! But Joseph

of Arimathea contrived to revive Him in the tomb; the apparition of an Essene in a white costume was enough to frighten away the guards. But the shock, had been too severe; at the end of forty days, His strength was exhausted and He bade farewell to His disciples.

Now here is something which would appear just as unlikely as Venturini's story. Mr. Schweitzer declares : " Venturini's 'Non-Supernatural History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth' may almost be said to be re-issued annually down to the present day, for all the fictitious 'Lives' go back directly or indirectly to the type which he created. It is plagiarised more freely than any other Life of Jesus, although practically unknown by name. " [1] Here is matter for consideration for one who would estimate the religious sentiment, as well as the enlightened reason of our neighbours. There have from time to time appeared among us evangelical narratives of suspicious mien. Thanks be to God, even these romances do not question the divinity of Jesus. And a place is reserved for them in the catalogue of the Index. I do not think, besides, that any Catholic has ventured to make Jesus figure in interminable dialogues without ever placing upon His lips a word from the Gospel. Lengthy paraphrase, lack of taste, naive wonder at the occult action of Essenes unknown to history, ignorance of the spirit of Jesus, such are the chief characteristics of this literature. Philostratus, in his Life of Apollonius of Tyana, is less tedious, and

1. Schweitzer, p. 47.

he makes fewer demands on the credulity of his readers.

III. Paulus systematically reduces the miracles to the proportions of natural events.

And nevertheless Venturini was not left exclusively to his unbridled imagination in composing his Life of Jesus. In his second edition, he had as a guide Paulus, whose commentaries on the Gospels had just appeared. In Germany erudition never loses all its rights, as it knows how to indulge the requirements of fancy. With Heinrich Eberhard Gottlieb Paulus (born at Leonberg in 1761) we are introduced into the higher teaching of the universities; and at the same time we have to deal with a very logical system, openly professed with all its consequences.

I am inclined to think that Paulus does not represent the true German proclivities. In Germany his rationalism has fallen into general discredit; his explanations are regarded as superannuated. This disdain condemns, it may be, his frankness, his uncompromising attitude, his decided taste for clear ideas, his invincible opposition to all that cannot be controlled by reason. Perhaps the most characteristic thing about his long career was the war he waged against Schelling, when that pantheistic-idealistic and German philosopher tried to reconcile his system with a nominal theory of Revelation. This compromise was sufficiently

artful to seduce some Catholics, like Goerres; it appeared to Paulus " an insidious attack on sound reason, the unmasking of which by every possible means was a work of public utility, nay, even a duty. [1] " He was, however, a Pantheist himself. His Pantheism was the realism of Spinoza. When one makes up his mind, as had the Dutch Jew, not to distinguish God from nature, there can be no question of miracle. Now Paulus prepared an edition of Spinosa's writings and wrote an introduction for them, at the time when Spinosa was regaining ascendency at the beginning of the XIX century. It is on Spinoza that Paulus depends as a thinker, rather than on Kant.

Here we may open a parenthesis in connection with the name of the celebrated Kant. To read some French articles on German exegesis, one would think that it had been wholly under the influence of the Kœnigsberg professor since the end of the XVIII century. Many seem inclined to make him responsible for all its errings, indiscriminately. I cannot accept this view, usually very briefly insinuated, and justified in a few words on the subjective tendencies of " the critics. " If subjective tendencies are enough to make one a Kantist, then the spirit of Kant might be identified with the Germanic spirit. But, avoiding such generalities, we see that the rationalism of Wolff and of Lessing is anterior to Kant, and that Strauss and Baur profess dependence on Hegel. Between the ancient Rationalist and Paulus there is no other

1. Quoted by SCHWEITZER, p. 50.

difference than the latter's logic and frankness. And there is no need of getting lost in conjectures, since Kant has seen fit to give his opinion on exegesis.

In 1793 Kant published his "Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason."[1] This religion could not be the real Christian religion, as Kant realized. But as the exigencies of the moral law had led him to God, inaccessible to pure reason, the need of the unlearned obliged him to preserve the form of Christian revelation, which gave to belief a valuable exterior representation. To respect this revelation was to preserve the Bible, and this he allowed on condition that Biblical teaching be regarded as symbolic of the truths recognized by reason.

The modern philosopher, then, calmly took up and applied to Christianity the exegetical system which the Stoics had applied to the mythology of Greece. This Stoic system was, as we have seen, a conscious misinterpretation of ancient texts, made in view of accommodating them to the taste of the interpreter's day. The Rationalist interpreters were concerned with history. Kant, as a philosopher, valued only the idea which is under the outer historical shell. He did not try to get at the mind of the biblical writers; consequently he did not practice exegesis. People accused him of falsification; Strauss was one of his loudest assailants. The Koenigsberg philosopher would not admit the truth of the charge. He merely disdain-

1. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft.*

ed facts. What did it matter what the writers thought? Reason does but use her rights in giving their books a sense which she judges alone acceptable, useful to the moral and religious life, ever susceptible of improvement with the progress of time.

Let us note, again, a difference between the case of the Stoics and that of such interpreters as Kant. The ancient religion of continental Greece had in the beginning a moral value that was quite high. With time, while taking on a more seductive form of beauty, it had divested its truly religious elements, and was but a school of immorality, naive, but not excusable, in its immodesty. The reason of philosophers could not explain all the stories of the gods without transforming them completely, with perpetual violence. It is not so with the Bible; Kant could recognize in it, far back as he could go, the features of a religion which he attributed to the instinct of humanity.

Different from the case of the Stoics, Kant's case is likewise different that of the Fathers who gave an allegorical interpretation of the Bible. The Fathers did not disregard the literal sense; they simply intended to add thereto a spiritual sense; Kant knew that his thought differed from that of the sacred writers. The genuine meaning of Scripture did not, in fact, interest him sufficiently to make him undertake anything like a detailed application of his method; and no attempt has as yet been made to show how the particular facts related by the Bible were the symbols of the new thoughts.

I close the parenthesis. You will perhaps excuse it as a faithful reflection of the intervention of Kant during the period of naturalism. His was a theory without much practical bearing, unless it be by the influence which its subjectivism may have had on Schleiermacher.

Paulus can hardly have been affected by it, since as early as in 1794 he aroused the indignation of the Consistories of Meiningen and Eisenach by his naturalist explanation of miracles. He only applied this explanation when, notwithstanding his trouble with the authorities, he published his "Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels" in 1800-1802. If, in 1828, his "Life of Jesus" [1] appeared to claim connection with Kant, then entered into his glory, it was only in so far as its author took his place among the upholders of a rationalist Christianity. But this was already the Christianity of Lessing.

I see nothing more than this in a passage cited by Father Vigouroux to prove Paulus' dependence on Kant: "The principal purpose of Jesus and of all of His, is to exhort men first to correct the gross inclinations of their nature and so to bring about, by a reform of individual wills which will make them like unto God, a social state worthy of the approval of the true God, a divine government adapted to the happiness of the greater number. Such is the vital germ, such is the essence of

1. *Des Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums.* The Life of Jesus as a basis of a purely Historical account of Early Christianity. Heidelberg, 1828. 2 vols., 1192 pp.

Christianity. " [1] Christianity is thus represented by the older Rationalism. Instead of bettering men by the influence of a divine society, Christianity takes as its starting-point an individual reform which is to react on the whole. This reform will find a light in the teachings of Jesus, on condition they be understood in the sense required by enlightened reason. Paulus had appropiated all this simple doctrine of Rationalism; and his program was readily drawn up. The Evangelists relate supernatural facts in order to arouse faith in supernatural doctrine; he must knock the support from under the supernatural doctrine by reducing the miracles to natural events and pointing out their secondary causes. The attempt was bold; he was the only man who has ever made it minutely and logically.

In the books in which biblical exegesis embalms its former doctors, Paulus is dealt with under the heading " Naturalistic Explanation of Miracles. " His shade is evoked all the more readily because it is easy to refute him. He left himself open to attack by proceeding in too systematic a way, and without intricate critical discussion of his sources. He admits the authenticity of the four Gospels, two of which are from eye-witnesses, the former publican Matthew and the beloved disciple John. He in no way questions the Evangelists' good faith and veracity. He maintains that the Gospels, properly understood, have a historical value, while

1. Vigouroux, *Mélanges bibliques,* p. 170, citing *Leben Jesu, Vorrede,* t. I, p. xi.

maintaining that no miracle has either been seen or been performed. The weak point of the breastplate is obvious, or rather there is no breastplate.

How could veracious authors relate miracles which were not miracles? Paulus' answer was that in some instances they did not intend to relate miracles; it was the commentators who made the mistake. Let us leave aside the rare cases Paulus thus accounted for. In the second place, the authors themselves represented as miraculous certain events which, for lack of knowledge, they could not explain otherwise. We are now less inclined to have recourse to the hypothesis of the supernatural and we are in a position which allows us to understand the real nature of what has happened; it behoves us to have recourse to secondary causes. There is a twofold advantage in this. The life of the great doctor Jesus will preserve all its historical titles, founded upon natural facts; and His teaching, disengaged from its supernatural husk, will be assimilable food for the men of our age. There remains for us no miracle, or rather only one miracle, and "that is Jesus Himself, the purity and serene holiness of His character, which is, notwithstanding, genuinely human, and adapted to the imitation and emulation of mankind." The miracles existed, however, in the belief of Jesus' contemporaries; God allowed it to be so because their minds had to be astounded and subdued by inexplicable facts. The impression made by Jesus' actions led to a forward step in religion; Christianity entered, thanks to a misunderstanding, which must now be done away with, in view of the

advance in intellectual culture; it has nevertheless a right to continue to live, since it is a natural religion of the highest value and offers in the life of its founder a model for all times.

This construction of Paulus was without solid foundation; the texts do not support it. Once you take the miraculous element out of their story nothing is left. Paulus displays considerable subtlety in replacing the supernatural by the natural, but he raises the fatal objection : If all took place in such a simple way, how were the disciples deceived? We know, indeed, that certain facts are enhanced by the imagination as they pass from mouth to mouth; this transformation may go, for all we know, to the extent of changing a natural event into a miracle. All appears possible, when one discusses matters in these general terms. But the concrete cases offer more difficulty. The disciples believed that Jesus walked upon the waters; could that faith have arisen from the fact that they saw their Master walking along the shore with His feet in the mist?

Paulus tells us that the Savior did not multiply the loaves; he explains that when Jesus saw that the multitude was hungry, he began to distribute His own provisions, and the rich people, who had with them camels laden with food, followed His good example. But, whence come and whither go these camels, so manifestly foreign to the narratives of the eye-witnesses?

The miracles of healing are but the " miracles " of a clever physician. Sometimes Jesus used medicines known to Him alone. The man born

blind benefited by a prescription of which Jesus had the secret; the Siloam mud was an oculist's paste. The saying, "This kind (of demons) goeth not out save by prayer and fasting," was a suggestion to the young epileptic's father to keep him to a strict diet and to strengthen his character by devotional exercises. Clearly this is not what the texts mean!

The raisings from the dead were only cases of coma. Jesus had realized the dangers of overhasty burial. In a country where interment took place three hours after death, how many seemingly dead people must have returned to consciousness in their graves! The wise healer was able to avert irreparable misfortunes. The case of Lazarus, who had been buried for four days, presented no greater difficulty than that of the daughter of Jairus and the widow's son. The brother of Martha and Mary had revived in his commodious tomb, and when the stone was rolled away Jesus had only to call joyously to His friend, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Naturally the case of the apparent death of the Savior Himself is explained in the same way. The lance-thrust served the purpose of a phlebotomy. The coolness of the tomb and the aromatic unguents of the holy women continued the process of resuscitation. The storm and the earthquake aroused Him to full consciousness, and rolled away the stone.

Do you not here admire the professional conscientiousness of Paulus, who utilizes the earthquake without believing in the Resurrection?

Truly it would be useless to refute an exegesis which does not deserve the name, since it makes it a duty to betray the meaning of its texts. If, in cert in cases, it does not seem altogether devoid of likelihood, it meets with one decisive obstacle which Paulus does not appear to have suspected. The Apostles cannot have been so stupidly credulous as he pictures them, obstinately bent on seeing miracles in the most natural occurrences. The display of such a capacity to distort would be, in history, an absolutely unique exception. There is no use of appealing to the East. Orientals, as we know them, are suspicious and guarded; and the Jews were not inclined to see the supernatural everywhere. Josephus, who wrote at a time of feverish excitement, relates hardly anything supernatural. When the Pharisees demanded a sign of Jesus, they intended to verify it. And, finally, if the disciples did have this extravagant proneness to change the nature of the actions of Jesus, even before they came to believe that He was the Messias (and it is the miracles that brought them to this belief), why did the Master not undeceive them? Why, instead of taking advantage of the common error to make Himself out a prophet, did He not preach against the abuse of over-early burials? That would have been the attitude of a straightforward man, of a benefactor of mankind.

Paulus certainly did not foresee that his exegesis would be a reflection upon the character of Jesus. By his consistent carrying through of his rationalistic explanation, he thought he was serving reason. We may credit him with a good inten-

tion; his sincerity has produced in Germany another systematically exclusive exegesis.

For its own good, this exegesis was too clear. Rationalism did not gain anything by showing itself such as it was; it was beginning to be out of fashion. Paulus' interpretation was declared to be without depth, which was true; but especially objectionable was the alternative of choosing between the supernatural and this artificial gloss on the Gospel. Paulus died in 1851, at the age of ninety, declaring himself ready to appear before God and accusing his last contemporaries of a want of honesty. [1] This charge is applicable at the present day if Mr. Schweitzer is justified in concluding his article on Paulus as he does : " Nowadays it belongs to the complete duty of the well-trained theologian to renounce the rationalists and all their works; and yet how poor our time is in comparison with theirs — how poor in strong men capable of loyalty to an ideal, how poor, so far as theology is concerned, in simple commonplace sincerity ! " [2]

IV. Rationalism adopts the language of orthodox Protestantism; Hase; Schleiermacher.

Rationalism had indeed, even before it was beaten into the open by Strauss, resumed its

1. Schweitzer, pp. 49-50.
2. *L. l.*, p. 57.

mask. We have been tempted to see in Paulus some features of the Latin; it is an isolated case : Mr. Schweitzer represents his next great exegete, Karl August Hase, as at once the " sceptic of rationalism ", and " one of the finest manifestations of German culture. " [1]

With Hase, whose " Life of Jesus Primarily for the Use of Students [2] " appeared in 1820, one year after the Life of Paulus, we return to the mixture of supernaturalism and naturalism. But henceforth it is more deliberate, and consequently more culpable. It is an expedient to avoid offending religious souls. It insinuates that Jesus perhaps survived, though He may have arisen from the dead. History and faith admit either solution. The miracles of the fourth Gospel are authentic, because they are related by John, an eye-witness, and likewise no doubt because they are less numerous than those of the synoptic Gospels. The miracles of the synoptics are to be explained as natural events, or rejected as resting upon a misunderstanding, on the part of the authors, of facts not reported at first hand, but handed down by tradition.

It is regrettable, from the Lutheran point of view, that Jesus did not marry. This is how German culture explains the fact : " If the true grounds of the celibacy of Jesus do not lie hidden in the special circumstances of His youth, the conjecture may be permitted that He, from whose religion was to go forth the ideal view of marriage

1. *L. l.*, p. 59.

— so foreign to the ideas of antiquity — found in His own time no heart worthy to enter into covenant with Him." [1]

Hase's "Life of Jesus," and his other historical and theological works, though all written, according to Mr. Schweitzer, with "clearness, terseness, elegance," [2] are not much read outside of Germany; Schleiermacher's [3] writings, on the contrary, are still very influential everywhere. His name stands for that attempt, in which Hase took part, to reconcile naturalism with the supernatural and which has produced what is called a *Vermittlungstheologie*, a theology of conciliation, or as I would be inclined to call this Germanic conception of Liberal Protestantism, a theology of compromise. It is no longer, then, "enlightened Rationalism," and I should not speak of it under the heading of this lecture. But the "enlightened Rationalism" which shows itself openly in the work of Paulus, is really not a different thing from the rationalism which lurks in the equivocal theories of Schleiermacher. The only difference it presents is that, instead of going alongside the supernatural, as it did in the first Rationalists, it resolutely invades the domain of the supernatural to steal its formulas and to put on the appearances of a regenerated Protestantism, more grave, more serious, in a word, more Christian. And this new manifestation of an

1. *L. l.*, p. 59.
2. *L. l*, p. 59.
3. Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, born in Breslau, Nov. 21, 1768, died in Berlin, Feb. 12, 1834.

assuredly very real religious feeling, has made an impression, even outside of Germany, upon those who were dissatisfied with the secular character of modern Protestantism.

Schleiermacher has perhaps even more authority in certain French circles than in his own country. Auguste Sabatier, who hatched Modernism, was a disciple of his. In his " History of Religious Ideas in Germany from the XVIII century to Our Days, " M. Lichtenberger has consecrated to him almost half of one of his three volumes. And in what a tone he tells of this creation of a new Christian Theology! " By proclaiming that God is directly present to the conscience, that we bear the treasure of the Infinite in our bosom, that religion is the consciousness of the finite as a part of the Infinite and that of time as an element of eternity, Schleiermacher, in one bound, overleaps that opposition between the natural and the supernatural which was exhausting the wisdom of his time. With a single stroke he upsets the house of cards of Rationalism and the old fortress of orthodoxy. " [1] As though it were enough to introduce into the Christian vocabulary a savor of Pantheism to " rise above the antinomy between rationalism and supernaturalism! " [2]

Schleiermacher was, indeed, open to the suspicion of Spinozism on the one hand and of orthodox reaction on the other; but we must not for that reason regard him as a theoretician of the golden

1. *L. l.*, II, 123.
2. *L. l.*, II, 202.

mean. He merely confuses two systems. Confusion in Schleiermacher is continual, because it is willed, because it is his whole personal contribution to his system.

I may venture to say that we are now upon the trail of Kantian influence, for the philosophical idea of Schleiermacher's system is borrowed from Kant's special brand of subjectivism. In this philosophy, God's action, which is infinite and eternal, can be perceived by us only under the categories of time and space. God's action is ever supernatural as coming from God, natural in so far as it is observed by us. Schleiermacher, following this suggestion, did not hesitate to affirm that the supernatural manifests itself to the human conscience, but comes within the limits of nature, just as soon as it becomes an object of thought. It is, indeed, true that none of our perceptions are infinite, if we consider them in our mind; but this does not prevent our mind from attaining, in its own way, an infinite object, and from understanding something concerning the supernatural. Schleiermacher's great balloon could be easily emptied by means of a very small bullet. But however that be, what concerns us is the application of the new dogmatics to the person and to the history of Jesus.

Schleiermacher, who was sufficiently indifferent about confessions of faith to advocate the union of Lutherans and Calvinists, regarded justification by faith as the essence of Protestantism. This was the incontestable starting-point of the Reformation, and it presupposed a deep sentiment of sin, of the

struggle against the flesh, together with an entire confidence in Redemption. All this is living in the conscience of one who proclaims his faith in Jesus Christ. But what was Jesus Christ? " The ideal type of mankind, endowed with a marvelous power of attraction, and enabling every individual to attain to a life in God, whose reign He came to found upon earth. " [1] Do not think, however, that Schleiermacher categorically denies the Divine nature of Christ. This would be too outspokenly rationalistic; he is resolved to hold a more even balance. His plan, announced without circumlocution and rigorously adhered to, consists in avoiding two reefs : denying the divinity of Christ or despoiling Him of human nature. With this criterion, he will never be embarrassed. We might also adopt it, if its terms were sincere, and if the purpose was not to admit nothing which would involve the supernatural. It is one thing to make a distinction between the two natures of Christ, another to insinuate that the Incarnation does not belong to the supernatural order.

What could result from a study of the texts, in one who had such dispositions? Theories may suffer some vagueness. In presence of facts one has to make up one's mind, unless decided beforehand to make them fit in with a preconceived idea or to look upon them as indifferent. Schleiermacher was so decided; facts counted for nothing in presence of a conviction born in the depths of a conscience which was in contact with the Infinite.

1. LICHTENBERGER, *op. l.*, II, 226.

Schleiermacher began the study of the history of Our Lord as early as 1819, when he first lectured upon the subject. But his " Life of Jesus " did not appear until 1864, thirty years after his death. It had to be reconstructed from students' note-books; but there is no reason to doubt that it represents his thought as far as his thought can be penetrated. He carefully refrains from indicating how much of the miraculous he would keep in the Gospel; the word miracle remains, the reality disappears. He avoids, indeed, naturalistic explanations. He insists on the spiritual power of Jesus, which was capable of affecting even the body. And, anyhow, what matters it whether a miracle was wrought or not? That is said even of the Resurrection. Whether Jesus survived the crucifixion, or arose from the dead; departed from His disciples before He died, or ascended into heaven, after a resurrection, does not interest faith. Schleiermacher really held that Jesus survived; but this did not prevent him from talking of the Resurrection. And here is something even stranger. If his Christ is not God, He is not altogether a man either. The prayer in Gethsemani did not correspond with the ideal of Schleiermacher; so he rules it out as unhistorical, justifying his position by the fact that St. John does not relate it.

Mr. Schweitzer is right. The Rationalists were more honest. But it should be added that they were less German. They were now definitely defeated. Schleiermacher satisfied the rationalistic instinct by dispensing with a belief in miracles, and he satisfied piety with his deeply religious and

resolutely Protestant meditations. Besides, the excesses of enlightened Rationalism were to be denounced seven years after the appearance of Paulus' Life of Jesus by the radical criticism of David Frederick Strauss.

At the end of the lecture I experience a certain confusion. I would not have you think that I have been jousting against wind-mills created by my imagination, or setting up straw men for the pleasure of knocking them down. It is a fact that this old exegesis, which pretended to substitute for the exegesis of the Church the results of an enlightened reason, is abandoned by all. Here we have but to record its failure. When we meet in the critical schools we are studying discoveries in philology or history which may be regarded as certain, we shall not hesitate to pay our homage to the indefatigable activity of the Germans. We have not yet seen anything of the kind. In the condemnations we have formulated, we have almost conformed our verdict to that of countrymen of those old exegetes. We are not more severe than they; we differ from them only in refusing to regard contradictions and a lack of a sense of responsibility as a natural excuse.

FIFTH LECTURE

STRAUSS'S MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL

What we have to say in this lecture will group itself round one name, that of David Friedrich Strauss; indeed, to give anything like an adequate idea of the person and work of this very influential exegete we would need much more than an hour. We shall not renounce all hope of drawing a true picture, although Mr. Schweitzer puts Strauss among " those German thinkers who must always remain foreign and unintelligible to the French mind [1] ". With Mr. Schweitzer's help we shall first study the man and his work as a whole, and afterwards deal with his first Life of Jesus, which opened up new ways by its application of the mythological system to the whole New Testament.

I. Life of Strauss.

Strauss was born in 1808 at Ludwigsburg in Wurtemberg. He belonged to that race of Swabia which in the XIX century gave to Germany a whole school of pensive poets attached to the traditions of the Middle Ages. His father was a

1. *Op. l.*, p. 108, note 5.

Protestant who strongly believed in the expiatory power of the Redemption, which was in his own case an opportune remedy for regrettable conduct; his mother, on the other hand, saw in Jesus only a sage, but she tried to imitate Him. Of the two systems of exegesis which contested for supremacy in the Strauss family, the better was the more poorly represented. David Friedrich was at first much attracted to that form of mysticism which we call theosophy or occultism. He made a journey to see Justinus Kœrner, who put him into magnetic relations with the " prophetess of Prevorst. " He himself tells us of the credulity with which he read Jacob Boehme, the theosophist : " I believed in the words of Jacob Boehme; my faith was as strictly supernatural as ever can have been that of any believer in the Prophets and Apostles; in fact, I thought that his knowledge reached depths unto which the Bible itself did not attain, and bore more distinctly the stamp of immediate revelation [1] ". This juvenile enthusiasm is not surprising in one brought up in a system which leaves every one free to appreciate the action of the Holy Ghost according to taste and feeling.

Perhaps some of you, Gentlemen, recalling the story of a Lamennais or a Renan, imagine that a painful struggle must have taken place in the soul of Strauss before he openly broke with the faith of his youth. If so, you are beginning to lose your

1. *Ges. Schrift.*, I, p. 125 f., in Lévy, *David-Frédéric Strauss, la vie et l'œuvre,* Paris 1910.

foot-hold; Germans are not Frenchmen. Besides, it was not rationalism which seduced Strauss; it was what M. Lévy calls a romantic (which means a pantheistic) conception of Christianity. For a while he was under the influence of Schelling, who taught him that the incarnation of God was from eternity, and that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ was only a symbol. He was captivated, indeed, by the idealism of Schleiermacher; but he saw that this new theology, notwithstanding its claim to reconcile mysticism with facts, was getting away from the traditional faith and simply ignoring history. He adhered finally to the system of Hegel. While at the " lower seminary " at Blaubeuron, from 1821 to 1825, with Vischer, Märklin, Binder, and Zimmermann, and following the lectures of Baur (who was still uncertain of his way), he began to study with his friends Hegel's new " speculative " philosophy. They eagerly read and commented upon his writings. And they remained faithful to him; even when provided with positions as pastors, Strauss and Märklin did not know very well whether they were still Christians; but they were unmistakably Hegelians.

You perhaps asked yourselves, at our last meeting, if the Rationalists still regarded themselves as part of the Lutheran Church. They admitted the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; held to certain facts of the Gospel, whatever might be the interpretation placed upon them; believed in Jesus Christ, whatever they thought about His person; and they were made to feel that their standing was good in their religious communities.

Märklin's father, himself a prelate and general superintendent of Heilbronn, and at the same time a liberal, a Deist and a disciple of Kant, suffered when he saw his son give up his faith. [1] The soul of the younger Märklin was agitated. How could one exercise the functions of a pastor of the holy Gospel, especially how could one preach, when unable to confess any other incarnation than the identity of God and man? He wrote: "Is it not the duty of a servant of the Church not to have two consciences exterior one to the other and contradictory: a personal conscience and an ecclesiastical conscience?" [2] Were one of his auditors to ask for explanations and he were to say what he really thought, he would lay himself open to the further question, "But, sir, why do you teach differently in church?" "I could not," so Märklin reasons, "expect him to grasp as we do, in regard to intellectual concepts and representative notions, the identity of contradictories: that would suppose a methodical education in philosophy..."

Strauss did not think for a moment of teaching Hegelianism in the pulpit; he continued to teach Lutheran theology. He asked whether the great preachers of the day were more sincere, when they commented on the Gospel in the cultivated manner, that is, according to Rationalist concepts. Why not go to the end of the method? Here is the text:

1. Lévy, *op. l.*, 33.
2. Lévy, *op. l.*, 35, note 1.
3. Schweitzer, p. 69.

" When I consider how far even in intellectual preaching the expression is inadequate to the true essence of the concept, it does not seem to me to matter much if one goes even a step farther. I, at least, go about the matter without the least scrupule, and cannot ascribe this to a mere want of sincerity in myself. " [1] Strauss remained ever faithful to this (Hegelian) sincerity.

In 1860, he wrote to his friend, Pastor Rapp : " The first function of the ecclesiastic is incontestably to teach the community the faith of the community. " [2] That is, indeed, his function; but his first duty is to resign his function when he cannot honestly discharge its obligations. Strauss asked in what he was reprehensible; he rendered to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, by teaching, as a pastor of the German State, the government doctrine; and he rendered unto God the things that are God's, by adhering exclusively, in his private capacity, to Hegelian philosophy. Lutheranism had, then, become one of the branches of the administration and was ceasing to be the domain of God! There was, however, a simpler method for young German pastors to get out of such an embarrassing position, says Hausrath in his Life of Strauss; it was to go to Schleiermacher and with him to insist less on thought than on sentiment. [3] And this reflection explains beforehand the compromise of the Liberals. Strauss was to take it

1. Schweitzer, p. 69.
2. Lévy, quoting *Ausgew. Briefe*, p. 409.
3. Lévy, p. 41.

into account later on; at first he was carried away by his Hegelian fervor. He had, however, not yet heard Hegel; he set out to visit him in Berlin, but arrived a few days after the master died of the cholera, November 14, 1831.

Despite his assurance, Strauss did not feel that he was in his place as a pastor; and when he became a " Repetent " of theology at Tübingen, he could not make up his mind to discharge the duties of that office, although it allowed of more liberty of thought. He explains : " If I know myself rightly, my position in regard to theology is that what interests me in theology causes offence, and what does not cause offence is indifferent to me ". [1] So he employed his time teaching the doctrine of Hegel. The philosophical faculty was displeased; he was forced back upon theology. Then, in two years, from 1833 to 1834, he wrote [2] the *Life of Jesus critically examined.* [3] This appeared in 1835.

After what we have said about rationalism, even in the German pulpit, you will be astonished, to hear that Strauss's Life of Jesus did not cause less scandal among Protestants than did Renan's Life of Jesus among Catholics. There was such an uprising that Strauss was removed from his post as " Repetent. " He himself wavered; and in his third edition, in 1838, he withdrew his denials

1. Schweitzer, p. 71.
2. Except the final dissertation.
3. The title of George Eliot's translation (Macmillan 1902) of the fourth German edition of *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet,* 2 vol. in-8°, Tübingen.

regarding the authenticity of the fourth Gospel. " He longed for peace, for he had suffered more than his enemies suspected or his friends knew. " [1] In 1841 he wrote to Rapp : " If I had been offered then (probably about 1837) a living pension on condition that I should publish nothing more, I believe I should have accepted it. " [2] He accepted more willingly still an appointment to a chair in the University of Zurich in 1839. But the orthodox and pietist parties caused the appointment to be withdrawn. The affront was not even dissembled by the offering of a pension of 1,000 francs, which he forced himself to accept.

Opposition had at first shaken him; after his disappointment at Zurich he broke more completely with Christianity. As we shall see, he had affected in his Life of Jesus to preserve the words of Christianity, while providing them with a Hegelian interpretation. His second great work, his " Christian Theology in its Historical Development and in its Antagonism to Modern Scientific Knowledge , " [3] was published in 1840-1841. He wrote of it to Rapp : " I have surrounded theism on every side and I have carried it by assault; I have frankly hoisted the flag of pantheism. The only consideration which decided me to soften, here and there, certain expressions more than I should have liked, is that I feared to cause the interdiction of my

1. Schweitzer, p. 72.
2. Lévy, p. 75, note 1, citing *Ausgew. Briefe*, p. 110.
3. *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwickelung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft dargestellt*, Tübingen, 2 vol.

book [1]. " He had to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. And the things that were Cæsar's were everything, since the Prussian State was the real deity of Hegel. That good German of the golden mean, Mr. Hausrath, protests against this rupture with the national religion : a patriot must not show lack of interest in the convictions of his people. Compromise again. But at the time Strauss would have none of it : " No man can serve two masters. The citizen will never serve the State with his whole soul until he is convinced that the divine is within human society, and that the true life is lived here below [2]. "

This true life of Strauss was not all happiness. His marriage with the singer Agnese Schebest (1842) was most unfortunate; they were finally divorced.

In 1848 the troubles started by the French revolution of February brought him into politics. He entered the lists in behalf of a German unity, to be attained under the direction of Prussia and apart from Austria. He was once more in contact with the people. As a young pastor, he had decided to preach to his flock the traditional doctrine in which he no longer believed. As a candidate for the Frankfort parliament, he had no scrupule about flattering the pietistic sympathies of the rural population by affirming his respect for the traditions of the Church. [3]

1. *Ausgew. Br.*, p. 90, in Lévy, p. 129, note 2.
2. Lévy, p. 134.
3. Lévy, p. 157.

He was defeated, but he succeeded in getting sent to the Würtemberg Chamber of Deputies. Here his enthusiasm for the new ideas soon changed into a profound distaste for democracy. Despite his platform, he ordinarily voted with the country-squires and the prelates. He has expressed his contempt for the crowd in a pretty formula, confided to his friend Vischer : " A duty towards the public or towards mankind is for me an absurdity. The mind acts like the oak which casts its acorns to the ground, when the soil and the season are favorable, without concern regarding the dear hogdom (Schweinheit) which down below stirs around it. " [1]

Nevertheless, in an official way, he made a great deal of the " dear hogdom. " During a considerable time he was less occupied with theology than with an attempt to regain the heart of the German people, and even when he studied the ancient theologians, it was always with the preoccupation of serving the cause of Germanism. His Biography of Ulrich von Hutten (1856) [2] glorifies a genuinely German hero, who united reform and humanism. According to M. Lévy, " it is upon the national character of the religious revolution that he especially dwells. The Reformation is the most decisive act ever performed by the German people... Germany is truly German only within the limits in which Protestantism has freed her from the yoke

1. Lévy, p. 170, note 3, citing *Ausgew. Br.*, p. 309, letter of Oct. 24, 1852.

2. *Ulrich von Hutten*, 2 vol.

of Rome... People may contest our title of Christians; but we will be real Protestants and sincere men. " [1]

Reimarus, whom Strauss next studied (1860) [2], is again for him a type of the thoroughly German scholar. And when he wrote a second Life of Jesus, nearly thirty years after the first (1864), he entitled it, " The Life of Jesus for the German People. " [3]

The German people was forging unity for itself with fire and sword. In the war between Prussia and Austria, Strauss had again sided against Austria, guilty of Catholicism. When the war of 1870 broke out, he had just published a book on Voltaire. [4] Renan felt called on to congratulate him, even after the beginning of hostilities; he wrote July 31, 1870; " Few readings have afforded me such pleasure as the perusal of these pages, full of wit, keenness and tact, in which the real character of our great man of the eighteenth century, so often misunderstood, is admirably re-established. " He added : " You doubtless think as I do that the duty of the friend of justice and of truth is, while going about all his appointed tasks, to disengage himself from that narrow patriotism which contracts the heart and vitiates the judgment. " [5] To this private letter, which went

1. Lévy, p. 187.
2. *Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes,* Leipzig.
3. *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk.*
4. *Voltaire,* Berlin, 1870.
5. Lévy, p. 41.

beyond the most extended allowable limits of French courtesy, Strauss answered by an open letter, published on August 18 in the " Augsburg Gazette. " It is a satire upon the Gallic temperament; Renan replied with excessive indulgence. Strauss wrote a second letter; and then put on sale Renan's letter with the two he had written himself, — for the benefit of German invalids ! Moreover, he complained of the hesitation to bombard the great Babylon on the banks of the Seine. He wrote to Visher on November 17 : " If Paris is reduced only by famine, it may be claimed that the barbarians did not dare to fire upon the capital of Civilization. " [1] He had now reconquered the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. It was he himself who next broke with them. In his last work (in 1872), " The Old Faith and the New [2], " he wished to write the catechism of those who no longer want dogmas or churches. To the questions, " Are we still Christians? " he answers, " No. " But to his second question, " Have we still a religion? " he is prepared to answer, " Yes, " if it be granted him that the feeling of dependence, of self-surrender, of inner freedom, which has sprung from pantheism can be called a religion. But his pantheism is no longer that of Hegel, who has by this time been torn to pieces by his own disciples; to explain the world, Strauss has become a disciple of Darwin. As regards the duty of man, it consists in studying nature, so as to conquer it, and in subordinating

2. Lévy, p. 250, note.
3. *Der alte und der neue Glaube,* Leipzig.

oneself to the interests of the race [1]. Since, moreover, he does not believe in the society of nations, Germany remains the proximate ideal of this state of mind, in which religion is replaced by science, worship by literature and music. The new philosophical idol of the Germans, Nietzsche, laughed at him.

He died February 8, 1874 at Ludwigsburg.

II. Strauss's first Life of Jesus.

Perhaps it is difficult for a Frenchman to understand Strauss; it is still harder for us Frenchmen to admire him. Let us leave it to God to judge his life; we shall here endeavor to appreciate the work with which we are chiefly concerned, his first Life of Jesus, that which, in 1835, marked the advent

1. One would imagine it was Marcus Aurelius speaking, in a somewhat modernized form : " Do not forget at any moment that thou and all thou perceivest in thee and around thee, what happens to thee and to others, is not something fragmentary, detached and without cohesion, a wild chaos of atoms, or accidents, but that all proceeds according to eternal laws from the primitive Unique source of all life, of all reason and of all good, — that is the essence of religion. " The Stoics, more logical, did not speak of fighting nature. But it would be useless to object to Strauss that Stoic optimism and Darwinian pessimism are contradictories. What can that matter to him? (Lévy, p. 267, note 1). M. Lévy thus sums up the new faith : " Respect for the human race, this is what he calls morals; respect for the universal Reason, this is what he calls religion. " (1. 1, p. 267). M. Loisy, in his book *La religion,* arrives at similar conclusions, but lays stress on Humanity, more than on the Universe.

of the mythological interpretation of the New Testament.

The method employed appears to have been indicated by the situation of scientific exegesis at the time. The supernatural explanation of the facts, such as the Catholic Church persists in, was more or less openly abandoned in the Lives of Jesus published by Protestants. We have seen how Paulus, to save the reality of the miracles, had felt obliged to give them a purely natural explanation, and that the sentimental protestations of Schleiermacher could not hide from clear-sighted people the fact that he had abandoned all distinctively Christian beliefs. Now Strauss was very clear-sighted, and he no longer believed in anything. His whole design consists in placing in presence of each other the supernatural explanation and the explanation of the Naturalists. He is less bent on destroying supernaturalism; it is regarded as refuted beforehand. But he unmercifully criticizes the expedients proposed by Paulus. He reestablishes with a steady hand the true meaning of the texts, that is to say, their supernatural content. And then he proposes to the reader the hypothesis of the myth. The Evangelists, he urges, certainly intended to relate miracles; you cannot admit miracles; recognize, then, that the events are beyond your appreciation. You have no right to declare historical a fact which you have just substituted for that which is affirmed by the documents. To reject a miraculous incident is not to rob the Church of its patrimony, nor even to deprive her of useful teaching. The Rationalistic explanation

is not only a baseless fiction, but a fiction void of any religious value.

Let us take an example. [1]

When the three synoptic Gospels relate the Transfiguration, their intention is to glorify Jesus, therein shown to be greater than Moses and Elias, who did Him homage; moreover, they wish to put on record that Jesus, already illuminated with supernatural splendor, was declared by a heavenly voice to be the Son of God. The Rationalists, for their part, tell us that Jesus had an appointment with two unknown personages. Paulus does not try to designate them otherwise;

1. Littré's *Vie de Jésus* (3th ed. in 1864) is the translation of the third German edition of the work of Strauss; this differs from the two first editions, as we have seen. The principal change of this third edition, of 1838, concerns the fourth Gospel. Before Strauss, the rationalists admitted without hesitation that this Gospel was the work of John, the son of Zebedee. C. Th. Bretschneider had raised doubts in 1820, in his *Probabiliora de evangelii et epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine*. But he had no following; Schleiermacher had taken under his protection the Gospel of the spirit. The criticism of Strauss had applied itself to ruining the authority of the Fourth Gospel. The reaction was so strong that in his third edition, he made concessions to the reigning opinion : " Not " he says " that I am convinced that the Fourth Gospel is authentic, but I am not so convinced that it is not. " (*Littré*, p. 12). But in subsequent editions he came back to his negative position, and it is doubtless on this point that he has exerted most influence. The third German edition gave in its text the discussions with the opponents of the first Life. The third edition of the French translation, with a preface by Littré, appeared in the same year as the second Life of Jesus by Strauss. This latter was immediately translated into French by Nefftzer and Ch. Dollfus, 2 vols. in-8°, Paris, Lacroix, 1864.

[In the fourth edition, of 1840, Strauss's earlier, radical readings are restored. It is this fourth edition, as translated by George Eliot, that is here quoted. Note of the translator.]

Kuincel regards them as friends of Nicodemus; Venturini as Essenes. Before disappearing in a " bright morning cloud, " at a moment when Jesus was surrounded by an " unwonted brillancy proceeding from the rising sun ", one of the individuals uttered out of the cloud the words : " This is my beloved son. " Strauss rightly remarks that " the disciples must have been so far acquainted with the appearance of the morning beams on the mountains of their native land, as to be able to distinguish them from heavenly glory... The one of the two allies who spoke the words to the disciples out of the cloud, must have permitted himself to use an unworthy mystification. " What, he asks, would be the spiritual profit of such stories? " Since then the text forbids a natural interpretation, while it is impossible to maintain as historical the supernatural interpretation which alone it sanctions, we must apply ourselves to a critical examination of its statements. " [1]

What is the result of this critical examination? The critic who has said so much against the Fourth Gospel, begins by taking note of its silence; the author, he contends, would have included the Transfiguration in his history if it had really taken place. Moreover, if the apostles had been coming directly from a scene in which Elias had actually appeared, they would not have asked : " Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? " Although these two arguments are entirely worthless, Strauss finds them sufficient to prove the historical character of the event.

1. *Life of Jesus*, pp. 540, ff.

The way in which the Transfiguration is handled is not an exceptional procedure; all the incidents of the Gospel are thus dealt with. Strauss's Life of Jesus is not a history of Jesus; it is, rather, as its sub-title indicates, a critical examination of His history. No attempt is made to establish a connection between the events, or to link them with general history; they are only passed in review, each in turn. The Rationalist explanation, it is pointed out, is contrary to the texts; the texts are contrary to reason; consequently the facts are not historical, at least as they are related. To support this negation, already pronounced by philosophy, Strauss appeals to the criticism of the Evangelists compared with one another. If they are not in agreement about details, or if they do not all narrate the same event, we are to see in this a proof or an indication that the fact is not historical, either in its details or even in its substance.

But, then, what are these narratives? Who gave rise to them? Reimarus had answered that they were to be accounted for by what the Deists called a sacerdotal invention. But the Deists, Strauss remarked, had not understood the evident good faith and candor of the narrators; and they attributed too much to individual initiative. Strauss's solution was that the narratives were born of the popular imagination, were "the natural flower the opening of which was favored by a spiritual community." [1] They were myths.

1. In Lévy, *op. l.*, p. 107, note 1.

" We distinguish by the name *evangelical mythus,* " says Strauss, " a narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered not as the expression of a fact, but the product of an idea of his earliest followers. " [1] If the myth is pure, the idea created the very substance of the narrative. But sometimes " a definite individual fact has been seized upon by religious enthusiasm, and twined around with mythical conceptions culled from the idea of the Christ. " Then it is an historical myth. For instance, Jesus was perhaps baptized by John. If so, the fact is historical; tradition merely gave the event a mythical aspect with the purpose of bestowing upon Jesus, entering upon his messianic career, the consecration of the Holy Ghost and the investiture of the Precursor.

The myths of the Gospel will be found to have two sources. One is the messianic expectations; to Jesus were applied all that men hoped to see realized in the Messias and in his work. The other is " that particular impression which was left by the personal character, actions, and fate of Jesus. " [2]

The myth is, then, always a spontaneous formation in the mind of a collectivity, by creation or by anonymous additions. There have been, indeed, in the Old and New Testaments " premeditated and calculated inventions "; if they have become

1. *Life of Jesus,* p. 86. (George Eliot uses the word mythus instead of the more objectionable *myth.* Translator's note.)
2. *Life of Jesus,* p. 86.

mythical, it is by growth after gaining credence and passing into the tradition of a people or of a religious party. And doubtless the action of the writer is not a negligible quantity; he may have added details, amplified circumstances, connected events. But Strauss does not devote any attention to such minutiæ, except to discover the myth which forms the whole woof of the life of Jesus.

You see that the "Gospel myth" is not altogether the same thing as the Greek myth. In the stories of the Gods of Olympus, even in those of the heroes or demi-gods like Heracles or Theseus, no one tries to find the lineaments of true history. If the works of Hercules answer to real facts, no one could tell which. Whereas Strauss admits that one is justified in recognizing a solidly established element in the history of Jesus.

But is not this falling back into that Rationalism which distinguished between the substance of the fact and the appearance which it has taken on? This is a delicate point, to which I call all your attention. The Rationalists stripped the narratives of their miraculous circumstances to find history. And it seems that this is also the procedure of Strauss. But whilst Paulus attributes the transformation of the facts to the confusion which reigned in the minds of witnesses, a confusion which can hardly bear upon anything but the interpretation of the facts, their substance remaining intact, Strauss attributes to the tradition of the nascent Church a truly creative power. It is to this popular tradition that Jesus owes His aureola. The New Testament writers reproduce what the

Christian community said about Christ, at a late date. Consequently, the facts themselves may have been simply invented. If criticism spares some of them, it must show that they are likely. Moreover, the tradition which was able to create may *a fortiori* have added to realities. In these cases, where an historical underlying element is left, the results of the Rationalistic and of the Mythological systems of interpretation are the same, though they do not explain the transformation in the same way. According to Paulus, misunderstanding arose at once; according to Strauss, there was embellishment long after the events occurred. The misunderstanding is attributed to the Apostles, the embellishment to subsequent tradition. Such is the system of Strauss in its main features. What are we to think of it?

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Let it be noted first that the word *myth* is out of place. We must protest against the use, in connection with the Gospels, of a word which for those who are versed in mythology connotes disreputable conduct. But the word is badly chosen for another reason. *Mythos,* besides signifying the antique legends which tell of the birth, the unions, and the adventures of the gods, — the sense that we usually attach to *myth,* — signifies also a fable or an apologue. " The fable is destined to prove that ", brings in the end of Æsop's fables. Now nobody takes fables for accounts of real happenings; and even in this second sense, *myth* suggests

a wholly fictitious story. On the other hand, the fable contains an idea which is set off by the fiction, whereas the mythological stories of the gods have no lesson to convey. In the time of Strauss, indeed, mythology was supposed to have a symbolical character; but to-day myths are rather considered as explanations of liturgical acts the meaning of which had been lost. Myths have doubtless other beginnings, but all have chimerical happenings as their subject-matter. Since Strauss held to the historical character of the principal features of the life of Jesus, he should have avoided the word *myth*. If he insisted on using it, it is because he wanted to represent the evangelical facts as representative of an idea; he used it in the sense in which *mythos* means apologue : his myth is a symbolical myth. But then the question arises, did the people ever create such symbols?

If one wished to reason with anything like rigor, one should distinguish between that popular legend which is called folk-lore, and more conscious additions made to facts in order to enrich history in a given direction. It is thought to-day that the historical criticism of the beginning of the XIX century, that of Niebuhr, exaggerated the part of the people in the formation of legends. The studies of M. Bédier [1] on the *chansons de geste* have certainly been a blow to the theory of the Grimm brothers. It was clerics of the sanctuary or jugglers who composed these songs on the

1. *Les légendes épiques, recherches sur la formation des chansons de geste*, 4 volumes, Paris.

heroic exploits of the ancient knights; the people gave them an enthusiastic reception; but they did not create them, nor make them out of already existing elements. But when mistakes of this kind have been made, it has usually been in cases where it was deemed possible to ascribe to the imagination of a group what was in reality the creation of individuals; it never occurred to any one to regard erudition as the source of popular legends. Folk-lore is varied, capricious, spontaneous; it does not follow a systematic method, it does not draw on books, it never attributed to Roland the gallant deeds of the heroes of the Iliad or of the Æneid. Such literary reminiscences must be the work of erudite poets. Now, in the system of Strauss, you will have remarked with astonishment, it is the Old Testament, that is to say, a book, which furnishes the type according to which the people is supposed to have composed the life of Christ.

However, for purposes of discussion, let us use the critic's terms, and let us see what is to be thought of his system.

The efflorescence of popular legend around the great personages of history, is a recognized fact. Nor did this take place only in prehistoric times, when writing, a necessary instrument of history, was little used. Littré, in defense of Strauss, has chosen an example from a period which is historic, those early Middle Ages which he knew so well. He says: "The great emperor of the West, Charlemagne, had hardly disappeared from the world which he had captivated by his wars, by his victo-

ries, by his power, by his conflict with infidels, when the warlike and Christian spirit of the ages which followed, little preoccupied about real facts, wove a marvelous legend about his name. All was transfigured under this poetic elaboration; as the accurate accounts of contemporary chronicles had little circulation in the troubled times which witnessed the disappearance of the second race and the rise of third, the fabulous chronicles were dovetailed with serious narratives, and if the real documents had been destroyed by any accident we should know nothing more certain about Charlemagne than we know about the siege of Troy, about Agamennon, Achilles, or Hector. " [1] This last statement is exaggerated; but we may accept the comparison. Charlemagne is a king, made illustrious by wars. Contemporary narratives tell his true story; then legend is added to, and even mingled with, reliable history. The same is said to be true of Napoleon, though in our day legend has less chance of getting into serious narratives. Now apply this to Jesus. If the contemporary accounts had dissappeared, and we had to depend upon the apocryphal gospels and upon certain legends preserved in the Orient, even in certain writers of Islam, we would be very much embarrassed to get at a knowledge of His person and His history. True! But as a matter of fact we have contemporary accounts, and they are the Gospels. And notice the astonishing distraction of Littré.

A young Israelite, who had wrought no miracle,

1. *Vie de Jésus,* Translator's preface, p. xix.

who taught a doctrine which was in contradiction with that of the leaders of his people, and who was by them put to death, — this very small personage is compared with an emperor of the stature of Charlemagne. Is it the legend that made Charlemagne emperor? He had the throne, power, glory. (Though he was not given divine rank!). Is it just to assimilate the contemporary narratives of the life and death of Jesus with the popular and poetic legends which were engrafted upon the immense glory of Charlemagne more than a century after his death? One lends only to the rich, says the proverb. Without the miracles, Jesus was nothing. The comparison with Charlemagne pleases you; it is indeed, enlightening; it presupposes the profound impression produced by Him whose faded existence alone survives in the Life of Strauss.

We ask the mythological school : " If Jesus wrought no miracles and did not rise from the dead, how did he come to be recognized as the Messias? If He was not recognized as the Messias, whence came the idea of attributing to Him the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messias? "

Strauss foresaw the objection and tried to meet it. You will judge of his success. He puts one argument very distinctly : " The Greek and Roman mythologies are the product of a collection of unauthenticated legends, whilst the Bible history was written by eye-witnesses, or by those whose connexion with eye-witnesses afforded them opportunities of ascertaining the truth, and whose integrity is too apparent to admit of a doubt as to the sincer-

ity of their intentions." This is his answer: "It would almost unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight in favor of the credibility of biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was written by eye-witnesses, or even by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events narrated." [1] He is confusing matters with his "biblical history." For it is clear enough that a number of the books of the Old Testament were written long after the events narrated; but it is, for the moment, question of the Gospels. Strauss was prudent enough not to assign them a precise date. But it is necessary for his thesis, and he clearly adopts the view, that they arose considerably later than the end of the first century. Now contemporary criticism confesses that on this point the arguments of Strauss are null and void.

He said, in particular: "Our second Gospel cannot have originated from recollections of Peter's instructions, that is, from a source peculiar to itself, since it is evidently a compilation, whether made from memory or otherwise, from the first and third Gospels." [2] What critic would to-day subscribe to that proposition? The second Gospel composed according to the third! The contention was established by the same kind of arguments as those which support the rest of the system of Strauss. As for the third Gospel, Strauss does not refuse absolutely to attribute it to Luke, the companion of Paul, but "it is possible that the companion of

1. *Life of Jesus*, p. 69.
2. *L. l.*, p. 71.

Paul may have composed his two works at a time, and under circumstances, when he was no longer protected by the Apostolic influence against the tide of tradition. " [1] But did not Luke protest beforehand against such an inconsiderate objection, in his prologue of the third Gospel, which is written in accordance with the best traditions of Greek historians and men of letters? Moreover it is not merely possible, it is certain, as Professor Harnack has recently proved anew on purely literary grounds, that it was one and the same author who wrote the Gospel and described the events of the Acts in which he had himself taken part.

Strauss could not foresee the results of a critical examination of the texts, which he himself did not even attempt. But he was wrong in constructing his system upon a too easy distrust of the documents. And he should not have attributed to the multitude in the primitive Church the basis of the teaching on the person of Christ. According to what we know from the documents, — and it is in the natural course of things, — there were from the beginning teachers and taught. It would be inverting the rôles to imagine a mysterious elucubration of dogmas, imposed under the form of history upon the Evangelists, who wrote in order to preserve the primitive catechesis. It is the Apostles who preached Jesus Christ. Very shortly after His death, He already lived in their souls, surrounded with the halo of a miracle-worker and of one risen from the dead, manifested as Son of God;

1. *L. l.*, p. 72.

not even a few months may be found for the elaboration of His miraculous life by the Christian people. The part of the people, if there was any, was confined to the arabesques of folk-lore, consigned to apocryphal gospels, but rejected by the authorities.

To diminish the difficulty of this rapid improvisation, Strauss has recourse to an image of the Christ formed beforehand in the imagination of the Jewish people. The disciples would have applied to Jesus an ideal already traced. Miracles had to be attributed to Jesus, since the Messias was to perform miracles! Answer: Let us admit, as the argument assumes, that the Messias was to work miracles; the people, then, would not have recognized Jesus as the Messias without miracles. The lowly son of the carpenter did not pander to national hope as Strauss, be it said to his credit, has recognized. His external rôle had absolutely nothing about it which marked it as messianic. How could He be taken for the Messias, if nothing in his works designated Him in another way as sent by God? Here is the concession of Strauss: "The following critique on the Life of Jesus does not divest it of all those features to which the character of miraculous has been appropriated." [1]

Really? Are we, then, to fall back into the confusion of the Rationalists? Not altogether. Strauss only goes so far as to insinuate that there *may* have been some magnetic influence which *might* give rise to the illusion of miracles performed. The magnetic influence could be effective only in the

1. *L. l.*, p. 85.

case of nervous diseases; Strauss distrusted the ointments and pastes which had been called into service by Venturini and Paulus. Together with the " overwhelming impression which was made on those around Him by the personal character and discourses of Jesus, " in an order of things which pertained to a rabbi rather than to the Messias, this (possible) magnetic influence must suffice to account for the identification of Jesus with the Messias. Such influences must suffice, even in the case of the meek teacher who was condemned to death by the priests and the doctors of the Law!

But there is the Resurrection! Though Strauss does not believe in the Resurrection, he thinks it may have helped to transform the humble preacher of Nazareth into the Jewish Messias : " After his death the belief in his resurrection, *however that belief may have arisen,* afforded a more than sufficient proof of his Messiahship; so that all the other miracles in his history need not be considered as the foundation of the faith in this, but may rather be adduced as the consequence of it. " [1] That belief in the Resurrection implied belief in the Messias may be readily granted. But a belief of whatever derivation! One might possibly conceive of its arising from the conviction that Jesus was the Messias, though this conviction would not adequately account for it. No other conceivable derivation can be found, if we refuse to believe that He did rise. And Strauss recognizes this. He rejects, as too clearly opposed to the texts, the

1. *L. l.*, p. 85.

Rationalist system which makes Jesus survive the Crucifixion. He will hear of no external apparition. But, he explains, Jesus " had constantly impressed them (His disciples) more and more decidedly with the belief that He was the Messias; but his death, which they were unable to reconcile with the messianic ideas, had for the moment annihilated this belief. Now when, after the first shock was past, the earlier impression began to revive, there spontaneously arose in them the psychological necessity of solving the contradiction between the ultimate fate of Jesus and their earlier opinion of Him — of adapting into their idea of the Messiah the characteristics of suffering and death." [1] In this embarrassment, they had recourse to books, and then, " foreign as the idea of such a Messiah is to the Old Testament, the disciples, who wished to find it there, must nevertheless have regarded as intimations of this kind, all those poetical and prophetical passages which, like Isaias LIII, Psalm XXII, represented the man of God as afflicted and borne down even to death. " [2] Henceforth they represented to themselves Jesus entered into His glory, His messianic glory. In these Galilean fishermen, who were so clever at discovering Bible references, and still more in the women who were with them, " these impressions were heightened, in a purely subjective manner, into actual vision "; then there broke upon them the full meaning of the text of Psalm XVI,

1. *L. l.*, p. 742.
2. *Ibid.*

Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption, and they inferred that Jesus had come forth from the tomb. At Jerusalem itself the contrary could have been easily proved, there " the body lay in the grave to contradict bold suppositions "; but Matthew (who here becomes alone worthy of faith) is said to have only one apparition, in Galilee, not to admit like Luke and John apparitions in the Holy City, and to be silent about the discovery of the empty tomb.

With time (for here again Strauss requires time, and he makes it stretch to long after Pentecost) belief in the Resurrection took root. For this capital dogma the Apostles are responsible. Theirs the honor of the myth. Popular tradition is here assigned no part.

Now, frankly, this reasoning is not serious. The baseless conviction that Jesus is the Messias is made the basis of faith in the Resurrection, and the Resurrection confirms faith in His Messiahship. The Apostles' illusion serves, in turn, as a foundation for the faith of the community, and the faith of the community dictates history. Strauss imagined the origin of Christianity as a professor of exegesis might have figured it out according to the Old Testament. Such organizations have not even the life of a popular illusion. And not only is his organization artificial, it did not take into account all the elements of the problem.

Strauss failed to consult all the texts which can best instruct us concerning the messianic conceptions of the time. He constantly refers to the Old Testament, as if it had furnished the features of a

figure known to all. At times he has recourse to the rabbinic commentaries, in which one finds the rarified atmosphere of the school, with its ingenious combinations; but these, not to speak of their late composition, can give no living idea of the Messias. Nowadays, we have a better knowledge of other works, earlier and later than the time of Christ, — apocalypses of various kinds, Psalms of Solomon, Assumption of Moses, — containing an erroneous, but contemporary, interpretation of the hopes veiled in the Old Testament. It is not easy to disengage from them the figure of the Messias. [1] Every one formed his own concept of him. But if He is now of heavenly origin, now son of David, He is always the Savior of Israel. It is astonishing for us, but it is a fact, that no one attributes to him those miracles of beneficence [2] which are bound up with our memories of the person of the Christ. The action of the Messias, brilliant and dominating, is manifested in the acts of a leader, a judge, a conqueror, a king, and in the interest of the nation. Imbued with such conceptions, the contemporaries of Jesus could not have recognized Him as the Messias, had He not furnished other proofs that God had sent Him. After having acknowledged Him, if they had freely followed the impulsion of

1. One may consult on this point the work of the present author, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs,* Paris, 1909.

2. Strauss cites Isaias xxxv, 5, *Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart.* The Jews did not understand it of the Messias, for Isaias here speaks of the action of God. It is as Son of God that Our Lord could in all justice allude to it. (Mt. xi, 5; Lk. vii, 22.)

their anterior messianic dreams, the Christians would have drawn on these anticipations to compose the life of the Messias. Legend, when free to spread its wings, does not dispense with such materials. The Gospel does not draw therefrom. Tradition kept the miracles; it introduced into the history of Jesus which it transmitted no feature of the conquering Messias. Such features are found only in the Apocalypse, and there they are reserved for the future. Even folk-lore, [1] when it applied itself to the Gospels, neglected the national character of the Jewish Messias.

Moreover, the procedure which Strauss ascribes to tradition is contrary to the popular genius. Take the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. [2] We should indeed be deeply grateful to the Rationalistic explanation, says Strauss, if it were true that it could free us from the burden of so unheard-of a miracle. But the text resists; it retains its miracle. On the other hand, the four Evangelists have a narrative of a multiplication. Method requires that attention be called to their divergencies. According to the synoptists the scene of the event is *a desert place;* according to St. John, *a mountain.* This difficulty, and others of the kind, do not seem insoluble; and they are not pressed. But how many causes, he says, may have concurred to form this narrative! Moses nourished the Israelites with manna (Ex. XVI) and even added quail

1. Cf. FILLION, *Le folklore et les évangiles,* in the *Revue du Clergé français,* Jan. 15, 1918.

2. *Op. l.,* p. 516, f.

thereto (Ex. XVI, 13). Elias multiplied the little provision of oil and flour possessed by the widow of Sarepta (3 Kings XVII, 8-16). Eliseus nourished a hundred men with twenty barley-loaves (4 Kings IV, 42 ff). And what appears to Strauss most significant, decisive (he has this word), is the resemblance of details. Doubts are expressed at Sinai and in Galilee. (They usually are in narratives of miracles). In the case of Eliseus as in the case of Jesus the bread is of barley. (The usual bread of Palestine). Consequently, the miracles of Jesus must have been modeled on the miracles of the Old Testament, by that mysterious entity, popular tradition! Not only is this popular tradition erudite, it feeds on rational categories. When occupied with the creation of the wedding-feast of Cana, according to the memory of the water sweetened by Moses or of the Nile changed into blood, it reflects that a change of substance would well become the Messias, but that His goodness would not allow of a change into blood : " If, on the one hand, a change of water for the worse, like that Mosaic transmutation into blood, if a miracle of this retributive kind might not seem well suited to the mild spirit of the Messiah as recognized in Jesus : so on the other hand, such a change for the better as, like the removal of bitterness or noxiousness, did not go beyond the *species* of water, and did not, like the change into blood, alter the substance of the water itself, might appear sufficient for the Messiah; if then the two conditions be united, a change of water for the better, which should at the same time be a specific alteration of

the substance, must almost of a necessity be a change into wine. [1] " This recipe for the easy production of legendary miracles may be recommended to philologists, in their *Studierstube,* having at their disposal a library (only fairly well supplied), a mug of beer, and a good pipe, to favor the hatching of oriental images. O lake of Tiberias, sunlit hills, naive and enthusiastic fishermen and peasants !... The Galilean idyl of Renan did not cost him much more than these learned combinations of Strauss, but at least he took the trouble to go and see for himself, and he did breathe the perfumes of the oleanders on the river banks.

But here is a last trait of German pedantry which cannot be said to denote much candor. Radical as his work is, Strauss presented it to the public as a means of putting religion upon a more solid foundation, and, not without equivocation, he insinuated in his preface that this foundation was still Christian : " The author is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The certainty of this can alone give calmness and dignity to our criticism. " [2] Peruse, then, gentle reader, these two bulky volumes which demolish the reality of things; assimilate their teaching trustfully. The inner essence of the Gospel will still be yours at the

1. *Op. l.,* p. 526.
2. *Op. l.,* p. xxx.

end of your study, for all will then be explained according to the philosophy of Hegel : " In an individual, a God-man, the properties and functions which the church ascribes to Christ contradict themselves; in the idea of the race they perfectly agree. Humanity is the union of two natures — God becomes man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit; it is the worker of miracles, in so far as in the course of human history the spirit more and more completely subjugates nature, both within and around man, until it lies before him as the inert matter on which he exercises his active power; it is the sinless existence, for the course of its development is a blameless one, pollution clings to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history. It is Humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, for from the negations of its phenomenal life there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the suppression of its mortality as a personal, national and terrestrial spirit, arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens. By faith in this Christ, especially in his death and resurrection, man is justified before God... " [1] The Lutheran cadence is pretty. Who can tell by what secret presentiment, or by what unlikely stroke of fortune, popular tradition so traced the portrait of its Christ that it represents the humanity of Hegel, the only Man-God. And what becomes of the Christ of history, despoiled

1. *Op. l.*, p. 780.

of His divine attributes? He profits, indeed, by distance and vagueness; He is relieved of the odious vulgarity of the Christ of Rationalism; but the real object of worship can only be humanity.

This is what was understood by Littré, the translator of Strauss, and never was more apparent the distinction between the two kinds of mind. The Frenchman accepts willingly the negations of the critic. He balks at the parody of Christian restoration. The result of " the vigorous German philosophy, the last effort of the metaphysical spirit " appears to him a " tree without roots, " " an edifice without foundation. " [1]

The humanity Littré knows is not the Man-God of Hegel, it is that of everybody. [2] And is it not remarkable that a great contemporary French exegete, after having completely explored German exegesis, should have stopped like Littré at the religion of pure humanity?

In Germany, the Hegelian interpretation of the Gospel even took on verse-form. I think I recognize the influence of Strauss in Sallet's " Layman's Gospel, " published in 1842. The program is the same, and carried out with more rigor. First the evangelical episode, then the Hegelian meaning. After the narrative of the Annunciation, the natural meaning is thus criticized : " So speaks the legend in its deep, mysterious language. If I am forced to take it literally, it changes into a laughable fable which has no meaning, and that living spirit which

1. Preface, pp. xxii ff.
2. Preface, p. xxv.

it contains is destroyed. " But all becomes great and noble if one but rise to the thought of the incarnation of God which is ever taking place in the conscience of humanity. " O woman! 'cries the poet, what thou bearest is holy and will become great in spirit. It is the eternal king, the master of the earth. There is no day in which God, to become man, does not come down into thy womb. Thus, new mother of Jesus, thou humbly receivest God in the heavenly purity of thy soul. Thou makest a paradise of this terrestrial valley and thy children shall be called sons of God. "

" What is most extraordinary, " notes the excellent Mr. Heinrich, " is that a great part of these verses were destined to convert Sallet's betrothed to Hegelianism [1]... " His conviction was strong.

Protestant Germany made no mistake about the destructive character of Strauss' work. " When it was seen, " says Edgar Quinet, " that it was like a mathematical consequence of all the works accomplished beyond the Rhine for fifty years and that each scholar had brought a stone to this sorry sepulchre, learned Germany was startled and recoiled before its product. " [2] It was indeed its own work, despite the original character of the mythological interpretation, since it joined in the negation of the supernatural inaugurated by Rationalism. And if learned Germany recoiled, it was only in order to render this negation more accep-

1. Heinrich, *Hist. de la litt. all.*, t. III, p. 385.
2. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Dec. 1838.

table, by clothing it with new formulas. You have heard it said that the work of Strauss was purely negative and that it "gave way under its own nothingness."[1] Its effect was, notwithstanding, very great. After Strauss, the critical schools did not even put themselves to the trouble of discussing the Divine titles of Christianity. Once the Rationalist explanation was put aside, it was understood that scientific history does not take miraculous events into consideration, either to deny them or to explain them. This does not mean that the question of the miracles is solved. If it is not taken up frankly, it is because it is realized that all the systems proposed have been found insufficient. They are utilized for want of something better. People continue to borrow some traits from Paulus; they recur more willingly to the myth, either the spontaneous myth or that derived from a reminiscence of the Old Testament; as a last expedient they take refuge in the unknowable. This determined attitude of criticism is largely due to the influence of Strauss . "[2]

Nevertheless, this same criticism reproaches Strauss with having gone too far and too systematically in the mythological interpretation. His sketch of the life of Jesus has some true features, though it was very far from complete. His negation of the early age of the Gospels rested on nothing

1. Vigouroux, *op. l.*, t. III, p. 545.

2. In his work on "Jesus and the evangelical tradition" (1910) M. Loisy does hardly anything but apply to the events of the second Gospel the principles of Strauss; cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1911, p. 294, ff.

solid. He had said nothing of the beginnings of the Church, nor of the composition of the writings of the New Testament. All these points were the object of a feverish activity, even during the lifetime of Strauss, and conclusions were generally more moderate than those of his first Life of Christ. He himself, in his second Life, is nearer to the position of the school of compromise than to his first position. This new phase of criticism begins with Baur and the Tübingen school.

SIXTH LECTURE

THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL ON THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

Ferdinand Christian Baur, the uncontested leader of the Tübingen school, was born at Schmiden near Canstadt, in 1792. He died at Tübingen in 1860. He was, as we have already said, a teacher of Strauss, and assuredly he had, as he has affirmed, traced in his own mind the main lines of his system before Strauss wrote. Nevertheless, his works and those of his school present themselves as a complement of the work of Strauss; and his principal work on " Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ " [1] appeared only in 1845, ten years after his pupil had published his Life of Jesus. The doubts Strauss had raised about the authenticity of the Gospels, the creative part he had assigned to popular tradition, that is to say, to the early Christian community, in the rise of the Gospel narratives and of Christian dogma, his destructive criticism of history and his tendency boldly to replace history by myth, all conspired to transfer the interest formerly concentrated upon the life of Christ to a wider study of the origins of Christianity. If the life of Christ was in great part an invention of Apostolic times, to what unknown

1. *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi,* Stuttgart, 1845, Second ed. published by Zeller, Leipzig, 1866.

forces of these times had Christianity owed its existence, or what idea had given such an impetus to the production of myths, the purpose of which was to teach Christianity?

If this question could be answered, there would have been acquired at the same time a criterion, a rule, by which to judge of the age of the writings of the New Testament. It is in the pursuit of this twofold aim that the Tübingen school showed a truly prodigious activity. It proposed to determine at the same time the principle of the Christian evolution, and to fix the dates of the writings which manifest its various phases. The school took its stand, then, on the positions of Strauss, or rather it tried to fill the void which he had dug; this is so true that Baur never attempted to trace the portrait of Christ. He admitted, without any special study, that Jesus had presented Himself as the Messias expected by the Jews. But he asked how did men come to adore Jesus as Son of God, how the faith of the Gentiles came to join itself to that of the Jews. He knew enough about history to marvel at such a union. The explanation, he held, must be sought especially in the writings of St. Paul, letters addressed to the first churches, which reflect their preoccupations as well as the mind of the Apostle. This was the means to discern the tendencies which actuated men, and, in accordance with these tendencies, to estimate the progress of ideas. It is for this reason that the criticism of Tübingen has been called the criticism of tendencies. It is itself very clearly the product of a tendency, as we shall see.

I

Baur's Reconstruction of Christian Origins.

Let us try to sketch the main lines of Baur's system, according to his first epoch-marking work, on the Apostle St. Paul. The central idea seems to be the opposition between the earliest Apostles, with Peter at their head, and Paul, the convert of the Damascus road. Peter, who represents the early Apostles, has recognized the Messiahship of Jesus. His faith, for a moment shaken by the death of the Master, is confirmed by the Resurrection; but it has not changed in its nature. Jesus is still for him the Messias of Israel, the one who is to give her such prosperity and glory as had not been heard of in past centuries. His death was but an accident, with no other bearing than to delay the realization of the national hopes. Jesus is absent; He will return to take up once more His interrupted national work. The second coming will make up for what was lacking in the first. Such was the faith of the Christians of Jewish birth, of what Baur calls the Petrine party.

The genius of Paul cannot be satisfied with this explanation, especially with this insufficient account of a fact so extraordinary as the death of the Messias. He thinks it must have had immense value in the eyes of God. It affects nothing less than the realization of the Messias' mission. It transforms the Messiahship, destroys its national

character. If the Christ died, it is for no less a purpose than to expiate the sins of the world and to reconcile men with God. By His death, Jesus died to Judaism, [1] and became the source of the life of the spirit for all men. The Divine spirit acting in men's souls, such is the absolute principle of religion discovered by St. Paul; it is far beyond the concepts of Judaism. The spirit strives against the flesh, frees the soul, enfranchises it from the Jewish Law, and unites it to God.

Paul had a penetrating mind. Leaving Pharisaism by his conversion, he went at a leap to its very antipodes; he was the first fully to grasp the meaning of Christianity, and logically to deduce its secondary principles.

His doctrine, entirely new, was to come into conflict with the routine of hereditary messianism, which were being transmitted in the Judeo-Christian communities, that is, the communities composed of Jewish converts which continued to observe the Law of Moses.

There is one view of Baur to which sufficient attention is not always given. He did not put Peter among the most resolute, or, we might say, the most obstinate, Judaizers. These obstinate Judaizers held that all Christians, whether Jew or Gentile by birth, were bound to be circumcised if they would be saved, and they exempted no one from any Jewish observance. The Peter of Baur really agreed with this view; but he and the other Apostles showed themselves hesitating in regard to

1. Cf. II Cor. v, 16.

the application of the Judaizing principles. Without the Law, no salvation. But Barnabas and Paul had founded Christian communities which were little disposed to submit to the Law. Must these communities be regarded as altogether outside the Church? It would be to deprive the Church of the success of a ministry which seemed blessed by God. An effort was made to save the principles by distinguishing two kinds of apostolate, without for this reason severing the connections of brotherhood. Paul assumed responsibility for his preaching, and he was given liberty to do so. He might go to the Gentiles to form them in his own way. But Peter would keep the Jews. Upon this understanding, they gave each other the right hand of fellowship, and Paul was invited to send, as a sign of union, the alms of the Gentiles to the poor of Jerusalem.

But the conciliating spirit of Peter could not lessen the antagonism of the principles; the conflict was renewed and continued between the two tendencies. The quarrel still lasted, more bitter than ever on the Petrine side, when, at the beginning of the second century, there were composed the works known as the *Clementine Homelies* and the *Recognitions of Peter*. Baur held that, through faithfulness to the memory of Peter and to defend his doctrine, these writings attacked Paul in a disguised way in the person of Simon the Magician, the adversary of the Prince of the Apostles, the type of the heretic and the charlatan. When passions were at high tension on both sides, a third party, threatening to the partisans of Peter and to

those of Paul, constrained them to come to an understanding. Petrinists and Paulinists had in common a certain number of principles and, moreover, a sentiment of the unity which arose from faith in Jesus Christ and from the practice of the same moral virtues. There now arose all around them a cloud of adversaries, the Gnostics, who boasted of a deeper knowledge, of which the sources were unknown, and menaced the simplicity and the integrity of Christian faith and morals. To withstand Gnosticism, the Church concentrated its forces, the old controversies were allowed to subside, and definite reconciliation was brought about by means of mutual concessions. Paulinism had triumphed in its essential contention that Christians were not bound by the Law of Moses. But the new liberty was limited by another form of legalism. Christianity was, according to Petrinism, a national messianism; it was, according to Paulinism, the perception of the spirit, transforming messianism into a universal religion in which the individual, freed from the Law, possesses the holy liberty of the children of God. Catholicism, which resulted from the compromise, had the advantages and the disadvantages of an agreement which, while it proclaimed the abolition of the law of Moses, kept its spirit of servitude, mingled with the spirit of liberty. It was reserved for Protestantism to restore freedom and thus to prepare mankind for the great Hegelian discovery of the religion of the absolute.

Having thus reconstructed the history of the primitive Church as a struggle between two tendencies which ended in a conciliation, Baur found

everywhere indications of this historical drama. He believed he now held a kind of chronological scale, which would enable him to date the writings of the New Testament according to the phases of Petrinism or Paulinism which they reflected. This scale appeared especially reliable in the case of the writings of St. Paul, the author of a perfectly characterized doctrine. Baur found the Pauline doctrine in its purity in the four great Epistles, that to the Galatians, that to the Romans, and the two to the Corinthians. These are authentic. At the other extremity we find the Pastoral Epistles, contemporaneous with the beginnings of Gnosticism, with the growth of those myths and of genealogies against which Timothy is warned [1]. Between these two clearly marked groups, the other Epistles, ascribed to St. Paul by antiquity are at the very least doubtful, and more likely spurious; they are in all probability manifestoes of the Pauline party reaching out for an accommodation.

But the principal contribution to the adjustment, the one which best embodies the peace-making spirit, is the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts are as it were the protocol, drawn up in the form of history, of the compromise between the disciples of Peter and those of Paul; they represent the leaders as already agreed on those doctrines and lines of conduct which were now settled upon by their disciples. Between them there is rivalry only in the efforts they make to meet each other's views. Peter, taught by a vision, opens the doors of the

1. I Tim. x, 4.

Church to the Gentiles, in the person of the centurion Cornelius; he declares in the council of Jerusalem that the Gentiles must not be obliged to keep the Law of Moses. [1] He is almost a convinced Paulinist. Paul, on his side, is full of deference for the Law. He solemnizes the festivals, visits the Temple, shuts himself up therein in order to fulfil a Nazarite vow, circumcises Timothy, the son of a Greek father. [2] The Acts of the Apostles are, then, to judge by their conciliating spirit, later than the middle of the second century.

Baur and his friends applied their rule to the Gospels with no less confidence. Between St. Matthew and St. John, there is as great divergency as between the four great Pauline Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles. The First Gospel breathes respect for the Law; it proves the accomplishment of the messianic prophecies in Jesus. It is the manifesto of Petrinism. The Third Gospel leans toward conciliation, though representing the Pauline conception. The Second, written according to the First and the Third, unites the two opinions; these opinions are completely fused in the Fourth Gospel, written in the year 170.

The Apocalypse, burning with Jewish hate, is, on the contrary, one of the earliest Petrine writings.

Like all systems constructed on bold and simple lines, the system of Baur easily lends itself to discussion. By its claim to explain everything by a unique discovery of genius, it is even somewhat

1. Act. x; xv, 10.
2. Act. xx, 16; xxi, 26; xvi, 3.

open to ridicule; it is rare that vital phenomena are so readily brought back to very clear principles. Ironical remarks, not wholly unjustified, have been made about the Petrinism and Paulinism whose combination would have given birth to the Church. The teaching of Hegel, of whose philosophy Baur was a professed follower, is recognized by critics as one of the principal factors in the production of the system. Petrinism is set forth as a thesis; Paulinism is its antithesis; naturally the conciliation and the compromise are the synthesis. All takes place in the rythm of the philosophy of Hegel. Mr. Albert Schweitzer rightly remarks that the Tübingen school employs the language of Paul to produce an imposing philosophy of religion animated by a Hegelian influence [1].

I think that we must recognize, moreover, the directing principle of Protestantism in this construction. Would not the best justification of Luther be found in the establishment of the thesis that he came back to the pure doctrine of that Apostle who first understood the meaning of Christianity? Does not this homage of history, rendered to the absolute religion of the individual spirit of liberty, mean an assured triumph over the Roman papacy, over the see of Peter, over the whole Catholic Church? Peter, whose successor claims to be infallible, would himself have understood nothing of the thought of Jesus. For Baur, through

1. *Paul and his Interpreters*, p. 16. This work is the English translation of Schweitzer's *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart*, in-8°, xii-197 pp., Cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1914, p. 288 ff.

respect for the Savior, seems to bring back to Him the idea of the universal religion. It is not without interest to remark this Lutheran inspiration at the beginning of studies which presented themselves as purely critical.

II

Baur's System tested by his Disciples.

Some of the disciples of Baur applied themselves to the development of his thought. Others, while they claimed to remain faithful to his spirit, pushed his conclusions much further than he had. The Tübingen school has had ultra-Tübingeners. Such cases are not rare in the history of criticism. The master had accorded to Paul the four great Epistles. But why? On the ground that in them the doctrine of Paul is found in its purity, and his opposition to the Law absolute. The conclusion was questioned. How could one know that Paulinism was clearly defined from the first? Do not all doctrines evolve towards their final, maximalist, form, and then appear in all their purity in the eyes of all? Now this maximum point of Paulinism is found in the system of the heretic Marcion, who taught his dogmas in Rome about the year 150. Marcion, more logical than Paul, kept nothing of Judaism, not even the prophecies. The whole Old Testament was according to him the work of a God of second rank, other than the good God revealed in Jesus. Now if the four great Pauline

Epistles have not reached such developments, they may be regarded as coming shortly before their formulation and preparing the way for them. Paul, brought up by the Pharisees, could hardly arrive immediately at the abrogation of the Law, especially if his conversion was not due to a miraculous intervention. What is suggested rather by the laws of evolution, is that he shared the Jewish prejudices of the other Apostles, save some tendencies to free himself from the Law, and that his doctrine later developed in a logical way to end in an open rupture with Judaism in the time of Marcion. This view seemed all the more plausible because the Tübingen school was inclined to speak of a mixture of Hellenic ideas in the Epistles attributed to Paul. It required time for Hellenism to penetrate Jewish messianism. In truth, Baur showed himself too timid. One has only to apply his principles to upset his too moderate conclusions. The attack was led at first by Bruno Bauer in Germany, then by the Dutch scholars Pierson, Naber, Loman and von Manen, finally by the German Swiss, Rodolph Steck. [1] In immense majority, German critics have protested against these excesses.

There are no authentic documents if we have to deny St. Paul's authorship of the Epistles which bear his name. The accent is not that of an imitator. They are not treatises which could have been composed under an assumed name, or prophe-

1. See the author's *Commentaire de l'épître aux Galates*, Introduction, p. LXXIX ff.

cies of uncertain date. Everything in them lives, is concerned with actual events and particular circumstances, everything in them manifests the sincerity and even the passion of an incomparable preacher of the Gospel in its beginnings.

But it was not enough to attack the fancies of the radicalism which had come from Baur; the master himself was attacked. The very thing which had at first aroused the greatest admiration was the first to inspire distrust. The discovery of a principle which would allow one to determine the authenticity of the New Testament writings and to date them, would be a great event. Baur was at first credited with such a discovery; then it was seen that the marvelous key had not been found.

Not that Germans lack confidence in internal criticism, as do many French Catholics. According to some of our representative scholars, the examination of texts is insufficient to indicate clearly the time of their composition. Internal criticism, as this examination is called, is hardly allowed to have any other part than to furnish probabilities in favor of tradition. According to them the great crime of German exegesis would be precisely the according of predominance to internal criticism. It may be; but we must not deny that internal criticism has much to say about dates.

One really cannot practice criticism without taking account of that development of doctrines, of those changes in legislation, of that ebb and flow of religious sentiment, of those movements of intellectual and moral life which one may, if one likes, call evolution. No critic can understand anything

of the past, if he has not first learned that history never begins over again. It does not, indeed, always proceed along a straight line and in continuous progress, especially, alas! in the moral order; but each epoch has its character, and the products of the mind ordinarily bear the stamp of their times. One can, then, when all the elements of the problem are well considered, distinguish one writing from another by the marks left on them by their time of origin, and according to these marks assign to them, more or less approximately, a date. And do not say that the findings of this internal criticism must always give way to the external testimonies which fix the age of documents. There are well known examples to the contrary, in cases where the testimonies from without are much later than the period to which they assign the writings whose origin is contested.

Take the case of the writings attributed to St. Dionysius the Areopagite. Those who maintained the authenticity of these writings did not fail to array the homages paid them by the Fathers and by Councils, to recall the place held by them in Catholic mystical theology. It was labor lost, for the Dionysian mysticism presupposes the development of Neoplatonism, which began to flourish only in the third century. Another clear case is that of the false decretals. Though they figure with their former rank in the patristic collection of Migne, it is incontestable that they are not the work of the popes whose name they bear.

Now the Biblical writings, like all others, appeared in time, and divine inspiration, while making

them subserve the things of eternity, has not deprived them of this stamp proper to the things of time. Need we repeat that the Book of Wisdom, though it makes Wisdom speak by the mouth of Solomon, cannot be the work of that king of Israel; and that all accept as a sufficient reason why it cannot be regarded as his work that it bears the mark of Alexandrine conceptions?

But taking all this for granted, we may ask whether Baur spoke the truth, as it is discovered by internal criticism, when he said that the New Testament authors wrote in the interest of the tendencies of which we have spoken. — We need not deny that the Evangelists, for instance, had intentions, and if you prefer the word, tendencies: the desire to make known the miracles wrought by Jesus, to bear witness to His Resurrection, to bring catechumens to the faith, to confirm the faithful in their adhesion to Christ, or even simply to satisfy their devotion and their love. But since we learn from the texts themselves that Jesus had not settled the question regarding the Mosaic Law, what indication is there that such or such of the New Testament books were written in favor of Paulinism? The most simple and effective way for a Paulinist to bring about the triumph of his cause was to place on the lips of Jesus a Pauline statement. Now it is impossible to find anything of the kind in the Gospel ascribed to St. Luke.

St. Matthew's Gospel was classed as Petrine because Jesus is represented as saying regarding the Law, in the Sermon on the Mount, "I came not to destroy but to fulfil." But this First Gospel

is, with St. John's, the most hostile to the Pharisees, among whom the so-called Petrine party had been recruited.

The Second Gospel was thought to come from the conciliation party, because Baur, like Strauss, regarded it as composed according to the First and Third. But criticism is unanimous in declaring it the first in date of the Gospels such as we possess them. It is incontestable that it contains the recollections of Peter, and it is no less certain that its author was imbued with what Baur called the Pauline idea of the expiatory death of Jesus. And since it opens the series of the Gospels, the union of the Petrine and Pauline elements is proved not to have been a late synthesis. Is it a synthesis? Is it not rather the faithful expression of the thought of Jesus? For it is Jesus who says in his Gospel, " The Son of man did not come to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many. " [1] Instead of seeing in these touching words the design of slipping in a Pauline theorem among the narratives of Peter, is it not more fitting to see in them the first principle, the Divine fact, upon which all the Apostles agreed?

Finally, at the same time that the difficulties of the conception of Baur were perceived, the testimonies contained in the tradition of the first Fathers were urged against him and against Strauss.

I shall not dwell on this point. The examination of patristic tradition did not interest the Tübingen scholars; and I need not enter upon this domain

1. Mk. x, 45.

to examine their doctrine. Besides I could not undertake to show by tradition that their opinions about New Testament chronology are wrong without a very close scrutiny of the texts. But I may assure you that the positions of Baur have been abandoned one after the other, by nearly everybody. Baur had neglected the whole philological department of New Testament exegesis; and grammar and lexicology, when consulted, pronounced against him. Everything leads to the belief that the Acts of the Apostles and the Third Gospel are from the same author, and the same may be said of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel. This does not mean that all agree about the composition of the books of the New Testament, nor that the attempt to discover their tendencies has been given up. But no one to-day would dare apply Baur's principle to determine their date, for this sufficient reason that the system itself has been found to be false. The principal fault of this criticism is that it is too much preoccupied about the intellectual evolution of doctrines; that it builds them in the air and then represents upholders of the thesis and upholders of the antithesis opposing them one to another to the accompaniment of a violent interchange of argument; in a word, that it thinks of Christianity as made up of two schools of philosophers and of early preachers and confessors as controversialists engaged like the canons of Boileau's *Lutrin* in throwing books at one another's heads.

To avoid a too arduous discussion of details, I shall examine the main features of the Tübingen

reconstruction of Christian origins in connection with the account of these first days, as it is given by the documents. It is the best method to bring out what is artificial and fantastic in the system.

III

The Apostolic Witness Consistent.

The Apostles had recognized in Jesus the Messias awaited by the people of Israel. At the time of Peter's confession at Cæsarea of Philip their faith did not perhaps rise much above the national hopes. [1] The request of the two sons of Zebedee proves how much ambition was mingled with their devotedness. [2] But the teaching of their Master raised them little by little above this level. When, after the trial of the Passion, they saw Him risen, they understood that His Messiahship was not that of a king, son of David. Not that they had at first ceased to hope for the restoration of Israel, [3] but they henceforth knew that Israel was invited to seek in Jesus remission of his sins, and that thi

1. Father Lagrange regards the text of Mt. xvi, 16 as a composite statement. The confession of the Messiahship of Jesus would alone belong to the situation indicated by the Evangelist; the revelation of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God would be made only at the Transfiguration, and the confession of this truth would belong to a later time. Cf. p. 304. (Note of the translator.)

2. Mt. xvi, 22 f.; xx, 20 ff.

3. Acts i, 6.

call, addressed to each soul, bore its fruit in Baptism. What would come would be the reign of God. Since we are arguing with Baur, let us leave aside the vision of Peter at the time of Cornelius' conversion. Let us recall, however, the first three discourses of Peter, preserved in Acts, to the people and to the Sanhedrin, the tone of which is so manifestly primitive, as Baur recognized; in them one cannot fail to perceive the accent of a moral and religious messianism, which regards as the first essential matter reform of the heart by faith in Jesus Christ.

Persecuted in Jerusalem, the Apostles spread over Palestine and came into contact with the Gentiles. Were they to invite these Gentiles, that is, all who were not Jews, to share their faith? If they consulted Scripture, there could be no room for doubt. The Servant of God was to be the light of the nations.[1] And it was the practice of the masters in Israel to recruit proselytes among the Gentiles. It was understood at the time that the people of God was not made up exclusively of one race; one might be admitted into it by circumcision and acquire a right to the world to come by the practice of the Law of Moses.

There was, then, an indication that the Gentiles should be received among the children of God who believed in Christ; that they should be purified by Baptism, and admitted to common prayer and the commemoration of the Lord in the Eucharistic meal. These new converts, Orientals more or less

1. Is. XLII, 1-7, etc.

Hellenized, then real Hellenes, then Romans and barbarians, found in the Christian preaching much more than what they had sought, at times with anguish and passion, in Syrian or Egyptian rites. They found pardon of sin, moral reformation, hope of eternal life with a God who had so loved the world as to give it His only Son. How would they have looked to Baptism for the pardon of their sins if they had not been taught that such was the meaning and efficacy of this foreign rite? Moreover, those who consented to be baptized received the Holy Ghost. This was the special grace of this sacrament, but this grace was then accompanied by wonderful supernatural gifts. [1] There was in the beginning of Christianity, an effusion of extraordinary graces, which the Christians witnessed, of which the documents speak as a fact known to all; and this effusion of graces, in which people saw the fulfilment of a prophecy, was granted without distinction to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. What conclusion was to be drawn? That the Gentiles were pardoned, that they were in favor with God, that Jews and Gentiles were under the influence of the same Spirit of God. In their fervor, the adherents of a new doctrine are generally very closely united; we must believe the Acts when thy tell us that the first believers had but one heart and one soul. They had, then, there can be no doubt, only one faith, as the principle of their union. It is into one of these new Christian societies that one should

1. I Cor. xii; Act. ii, etc.

enter to find out whether in reality, independently of Paul's intervention, the converted Jews expected of Jesus only the fulfilment of their national dream. It would be very strange that this dream attracted so many strangers. But besides, we know by those very Epistles of Paul which Baur pronounces authentic, that most of the Jews remained deaf to the preaching of the Apostles. The reason, St. Paul tells us, is that they did not know the real nature of the righteousness required by God, that they obstinately persisted in seeking righteousness not in Christ but in the Law; and, again, that the Cross was for them a stumbling-block, that they did not will to seek in the death of Christ the pardon accorded to the world by God. Paul, indeed, interprets the fact according to his own principles, but the fact he did not invent; the preaching of the Apostles had little success among the Jews. He does not, either, invent the explanation of the fact; no other reason can be given than that which he had learned from his experience. The preaching of the first Apostles was, then, that men must ask God pardon of sins through the power of the death of Christ. All Christians agreed on this point, and they formed a Church, according to the words of Paul, who confesses that he persecuted it. [1] Paul is not a philosopher who conceives a system and who, after having ripened and developed it, compares it to another system. He is a man of action who enters the Church he had persecuted, because it

1. Gal. I, 13.

possesses the truth. It is true that he does not sit at the feet of the Apostles. He is conscious of having been enlightened by God who revealed to him His Son Jesus Christ and gave him that revelation which unfolded in his mind into a theology. But he is conscious, likewise, of having preached the same faith which he had hitherto persecuted; and the Churches of Judea, those of the Petrinists, recognize that he does so and glorify God. [1] There is in the New Testament no trace of a conflict between Peter and Paul concerning the salvation which both ascribe to Baptism and to faith in Christ Jesus.

Were they at odds concerning the duty of practicing the Jewish law?

The Jews converted to Jesus Christ continued to practice the traditional observances. The Apostles themselves went up to the Temple to pray. And doutless if a few Gentiles were converted in the cities of Palestine, especially at Jerusalem, they would readily lend themselves to the observation of the Law which was the rule around them. But the Gospel spread far from Judea, in cities in which the pagan element predominated. The Gentiles were entering the Church in great numbers. Barnabas and Paul, who distinguished themselves as apostles of the Gentiles in Syria and at Antioch, asked of them nothing more than a sincere adhesion of mind and heart to the salvation which was announced to them. Of the Jewish law, there was no question. The Gentiles, without asking whe-

1. Gal. I, 22-24.

ther it was abrogated or not, did not think of practicing it, and no one constrained them to do so.

We have then, in the beginning, not precisely two theses, nor the thesis and the antithesis, but two practices. The theoretical problem was solved by the life of the Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, according to the fundamental principle of faith.

However a thesis was stated when, nearly twenty years after the Resurrection of Christ, there entered upon the scene at Antioch some Jews whom St. Paul calls simply false brethren. [1] All those who thought as did these Jews did not perhaps deserve such a qualification, and many may have been in very good faith. The God of Israel had given a law to His people, a law whose practice had been preached by the prophets, a law which was to be, like the Messias, a light for the nations, since it was of divine origin. It appeared, then, to some Jews become Christians that the Messias and the Law were two coordinate instruments in the designs of God to procure His reign, the mission of the Messias being to bring all the peoples to the practice of the Law. The first duty of the Gentiles converted to the Messias was, then, to practice the fundamental article of the alliance made not with Moses only, but with Abraham, the father of believers, who received circumcision as a sign of the covenant.

Such is the thesis, which Baur called Petrinism, but which the Epistle to the Galatians ascribes to

1. Gal. II, 4.

" false brethren. " We do not see at first the rise of an antithesis on the abrogation of the Law. The Gentiles asked only that they be left free. They would not, however, be in disagreement with the Apostles of Jerusalem, who had known Jesus, and they already showed, that they were in agreement with them, when they took them for judges. Barnabas and Paul started for Jerusalem.

It is at Jerusalem that the question was examined and solved.

Jesus had not, strange to say, and to the scandal of many, settled the matter beforehand. He had not taught the Apostles that the Law would cease to bind. He had founded the Church and given her a chief; but He had not told this chief that the Church was to be freed from Mosaic observances. Inexplicable lacuna! cry out those who know how states are founded. Why did Jesus not compose a definitive theological *Summa*, or at least a complete symbol of faith? The same difficulty might be raised every time there is a doubt in the Church. This silence cannot embarrass anyone but Protestants, who recognize no living authority. It was astonishing silence, but worthy of a Divine Founder! The great statesman who is about to disappear endeavors to foresee everything and gives instructions as explicit as he can. A still greater man would hold his peace, as did Alexander, realizing the impossibility of regulating the future. Jesus says : " Go and preach, teach all nations, I will be with you. " He has given authority to His Church; this authority, with His assistance, must suffice.

The leaders of the Church had, then, to decide what was to be believed and done; and they decided not to oblige the Gentiles to receive circumcision. [1]

It is here that Baur's criticism comes in. In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul, the champion of freedom, affirms that his practice was recognized as legitimate. He said that the notables of Jerusalem imposed nothing upon the converted Gentiles which would subject them in part to the Law of Moses. [2] On the contrary, the Acts of the Apostles present the decision as a compromise. [3] The converted Gentiles shall not be held to circumcision, but they shall abstain from the impurity of idols, from fornication, from blood, and from the meat of animals which had been strangled; in other, more modern words, they are held to correct conduct as regards chastity, and forbidden to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to idols or killed in a way that did not allow of thorough bleeding. There is, then, an antinomy between the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians.

I confess that, in regard to this special difficulty, critics have not yet reached an agreement. I shall not draw you into this discussion, which requires careful handling. [4] One may, without recourse to any disloyal evasion, look upon these four restrictions as an administrative accommodation destined

1. Gal. II, 3, ff.
2. Gal. II, 6.
3. Acts XV, 26.
4. See the author's *Commentaire sur l'épître aux Galates.*

to foster good relations. Circumcision not being required of the Gentiles, they are not forced to enter Judaism to go to Jesus Christ. This question of principle settled, Paul is not concerned about rules required by charity. He was prepared to do much more, to show himself a Jew with Jews to win them to Jesus Christ.[1] Once it is well understood that circumcision has no value for salvation, nor any other point of the Law, he is willing that one should observe legal prescriptions in the interest of the Gospel. It is thus that we may explain his yielding to Jewish wishes, which Baur judges contrary to his moral dignity; it is but another manifestation of his Apostolic soul. Everything the Acts relate of his respect for the Law comes from the same spirit. But this same Paul would not permit a concession which might appear compromising for principles and which would be an obstacle to the apostolate. This is what explains his attitude towards St. Peter.

Remember Baur's contention. At Jerusalem, Peter and the Apostles, though convinced that the Gentiles converted by Paul were not in the way of salvation, not only left him free to go on with his work, but concluded with him a formal agreement the day they gave him the hand of fellowship. This agreement was but a vulgar bargain, if, based on no conviction, it was arrived at on the understanding that Paul should send to Jerusalem alms gathered among the Gentiles. And Paul, who had come to Jerusalem to see whether he had run in vain as

1. I Cor. IX, 20.

his opponents maintained, would have upheld neither the rights nor the truth of the Gospel. It is such a transaction that would be guilty; and it would be as dishonorable for Paul as for Peter, James and John. But St. Paul's text speaks of an accord sincere on both sides, which solves absolutely the question of principle, and secures the maintenance of the truth of the Gospel. [1] His reproach to St. Peter at Antioch, which it would be wrong to dissemble, or to suppose addressed to an unknown Cephas, proves precisely that Peter and Paul were at one on principles, and even, up to a certain moment, on their application. If Peter had believed the Law obligatory, even for Gentiles, how could he have dispensed himself from it? How could Paul say to Him, "If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, how dost thou oblige the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" [1] Peter lived as did the Gentiles, and Paul did not tell him that this was contrary to his principles, but, on the contrary, that he was getting away from his principles when he gave up eating with the Gentiles, through fear of the determined Judaizers. Peter's principles are not represented as more Jewish than those of Barnabas, the companion of Paul, who joined Peter in his inconsistent conduct.

Peter, James and John, Paul and Barnabas, were in accord because they sought their salvation in faith in Christ, who had reconciled them with God and who stretched forth His arms to all men, Jew or Gentile. The theoretical question which might

1. Gal. II, 14.

have divided them had been settled by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Paul's preaching, his groups of believers converted without circumcision, were the work of God; all his converts formed part of the Church of God. If there were doubts before the meeting at Jerusalem, they could not bear upon the only principle of religious union, salvation in Jesus Christ. In joining the Church, Paul adhered to this principle. His rôle was to deduce more distinctly its consequences, for it involved the abrogation of the Law even for the Jews. But Paul was not preoccupied about the ultimate practical applications of his opinions. Charged with the evangelization of the Gentiles, he showed himself full of deference for the Apostles of the circumcision, especially for James. Is it just to cut these facts out of history, under the pretext of making the dialectics of the religion of the absolute work out inflexibly?

All this evolution of Christianity, freeing itself little by little from the Jewish law, was a true development, that is to say, a transformation due not to a series of opportunist measures, nor to political concessions between two parties, but to the influence of one principle on which all agreed. In recognizing Jesus as the Messias, the first disciples of the Apostles and the Gentiles asked Him, through the inherent power of His death, pardon for sin, reconciliation with God, and later a place in the kingdom of God. To seek God in Jesus Christ was to assure one's salvation, was to belong to the people of God. What purpose henceforth had that Law whose principal aim was to recruit and con-

serve a people into the Lord? It might be thought necessary to observe the national rites so long as the temple remained standing. Its ruin was like an oracle, announcing a new epoch. The Christianity of Paul triumphed, because it was that of the primitive Church, that which had as its foundation worship rendered to Jesus, faith in Jesus Christ, or rather the Christ Jesus Himself.

IV

Greek Philosophy and the Gospel of Paul.

To recognize this as the meaning of primitive Christianity is not to derogate from the glory of Paul. His was the honor of receiving into his soul the revelation which he developed so admirably. He is connected with the first Apostles, and he is connected with the first Fathers. Baur had attacked the first connection; his disciples, more or less faithful, have tried to throw new light upon the second connection, that which secured the transmission of doctrine to Greek Christendom. They sought in the first theologian of Christianity traces of the turn of mind or of the doctrines of Hellenism; the Greek mind, they contended, must have somewhat influenced at least the shadings of his religious conception, thus rendering it more accessible to the Gentiles than the pure Judaism of the first Apostles.

This sort of research is not contrary to Catholic

principles and it does not cast discredit upon the sacred writers. The older exegetes did, indeed, look at things from another angle. When they found in Seneca truly religious thoughts, a constant concern for moral perfection, charitable regard for other human beings, even for slaves, whom he would see treated as brothers, they noted the distance between him and Cicero and sought to explain the progress by Christian influence. They imagined that between St. Paul and the philosopher there had been an interchange of letters in which the minister of Nero played the part of disciple. But Seneca is easily connected with the line of Stoic moralists; he is more human than his predecessors, but others will follow him in sympathy for men. At Tübingen the question was rather, whether Paul had not borrowed something from the philosophy of his time. Would it, after all, be astonishing that one who knew how to become a Jew with the Jews, a Gentile with the Gentiles, who had, according to Acts [1] quoted a half-verse of Aratus, should have used his Hellenic culture to construct his theology? He would in this have done only what the theologians of the Middle Ages were to do, and St. Thomas Aquinas more boldly than anyone else, when they incorporated into their *Summas* the best part of ancient wisdom.

And could he even do otherwise? The Judaism of his time had been for centuries in contact with

1. Act. XVII, 28 : τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν, in ARATUS, *Phaenom.*, II.

Hellenism. Borne upon the wings of victory with Alexander, the Greek genius had carried on the conquest of Asia after the premature death of the young hero. For a moment it had seemed on the point of triumphing at Jerusalem as it had in the other Syrian cities. The reaction of the faithful companions of the Machabees had averted a complete defeat of pure Judaism in the Holy City; but Hellenism was to penetrate into it insidiously in the days of the last Asmoneans, more openly in the reign of Herod. Everywhere else its influence was paramount, particularly at Tarsus where Paul was born, and where, since he was a Roman citizen, he must have received a good education. These general considerations have their weight. They have been exploited as a support by those who deny the special action of God in the propagation of Christianity. Judaism, with its barbarian origin and its national character, had no chance of being adopted by the Greeks. Nevertheless, they desired a religion more serious than their own, one less compromised by mythology, rich in promises of salvation. A recipe bound to be successful would combine with Jewish monotheism, so elevated as a conception, so pure in its morals, so seductive in its promises of eternal life, an appearance of Greek philosophy. It was insinuated that the success of Christianity was due in part to the elaboration of Judaism in the mind of Paul, in which it mingled, whether by juxtaposition or by fusion, with elements of Greek origin.

But, in the first place, the authors of this system forgot that the recipe had been tried, and long since,

by the Jews of Alexandria. History, philosophy, poetry, works composed under the names of the masters of Hellenism, or falsification of their texts, all had been made use of to convince the Greeks in the most appropriate manner that Judaism was the depositary of religious truth. The effort met with little success. And when, after the ruin of Jerusalem, this Judaism polished by Greek civilization ceased to be in contact with the authentic and uncompromising Judaism of Palestine, it was the faith of the rabbis which was perpetuated in its integrity. The fusion had failed, and the attempt was not renewed.

And, nevertheless, Philo, to name only him, had done everything to attract the Greeks. The national history which might arouse their hostility was volatilized into subtle allegories, in the taste of Stoic philosophers. The morals were theirs, with their fundamental principle that man's perfection consists in living according to nature. The Prophets, friends of God, had received from Him truthful oracles. This was the foundation of a mystical system which the Old Testament had not developed, but which Philo knew how to combine with the mystical tendencies of Platonism. Now all this had little effect — except upon the Christian apologists. The Greek world was refractory. Among the Romans, more inclined to appreciate moral values, Judaism made more progress, but rather, it would seem, by its uncompromising character than by its concessions. At least Juvenal depicts the sons of converts as more zealous than their fathers, and

Epictetus is the echo of the contempt incurred by half-Jews. [1]

The combination of Greek philosophy with Judaism was not acceptable. Behind the facade, which was like the adorned front of an ancient theatre, the Gentiles perceived the obligation to keep the sabbath, to abstain from certain foods, to practice circumcision. The sabbath would only have been another holiday, but the rest of the program seemed too hard.

It is perfectly evident, of course, that Paul helped the expansion of Christianity by freeing the Gentiles from the Jewish law. But this abrogation of the law is only a practical consequence of his doctrine; it was, we have just said, admitted by the whole Church. It is not what people mean when they speak of an infiltration of Greek ideas in to the theology of Paul. What they do mean is not made perfectly clear. According to Mr. Schweitzer, critics more or less dependent on the school of Tübingen sometimes give the impression that, in this difficult matter, they purposely render their discussions a little obscure and incoherent, and are more preoccupied with hiding than revealing their views, in order not to expose them to attacks.

We may, however, illustrate their point of view by stating the question they raise concerning the peculiarly Pauline teaching about the flesh and the spirit. There is in Plato a vehement sentiment

1. On these points see *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, pp. 278-281.

of the opposition between the reason and the lower passions, which he treats as wild beasts. The soul is in the body as in a prison; it must be freed from the flesh to contemplate ideas and God Himself. Is it not from these aspirations towards the life of the spirit that Paul has borrowed his dualism, his teaching concerning the opposition between the two powers which struggle within us?

To-day no one would dare to say so. Comparison shows that the systems agree in one point, namely, the antagonism between reason and the evil tendencies of our nature, described by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But this is only a commonplace of moralists, a fact observed by Euripides as well as by Plato, and even by the frivolous Ovid; it is a state of conscience that any one may realize. The part of philosophical thought begins when one seeks the origin of this intestine war which seems to reveal in us two principles of action distinct and opposed. From this point, Plato and Paul each follows his own way. Plato distinguishes two and even three souls, and going deeper, he discovers the first principle of the struggle which rends us in the antinomy between spirit and matter. The soul, which is spiritual in its nature, has fallen into the body to atone for a fault; she will pursue her own destinies on regaining independence [1]. According to St. Paul, man dragged down by sin cannot triumph over it altogether by the force of reason; he needs to have the Holy Ghost act on him and within him. But the powers hostile to that

1. See especially Plato's *Phaedra*.

Spirit which gives Itself to him, are not proper to the body alone; they reside also in the reasonable part of man; the point is not to overcome the elements of matter, but to die to a life engaged in sin and to live a Divine life. The Divine life begins even now, when we are body and soul; it will have its complete expansion after the resurrection when the body is spiritualized. Paul needs not to borrow from books; he has consciousness of the change accomplished in humanity. What are the uncertain ideas of Plato, his appeals more or less authentic for divine help, [1] compared to the chant of triumph of Paul, sure of the love of God in Christ?

Moreover, this aspect of the Platonic philosophy, soliciting divine influences, was almost forgotten in the first century of our era. Neoplatonism will disengage from it a whole mystic system. But in Paul's times the most widespread philosophy, that of the Stoics, hardly recognized any need of the help of God. Despite some sentences about prayer, — which must be understood in the sense of pantheism, — Seneca, like all the other masters of the school, counted only upon the free will of man to secure his destiny. " The wise man is the companion of the gods, he is not their supplicant. " [2] This is the firm conviction of all the philosophers who believed in Providence. The others thought with Epicurus that the gods did not concern themselves with men. All this popular philosophy

1. It is known that the second *Alcibiades* is not certainly the work of Plato.

2. Ep. xxxi, 8.

was properly estimated by St. Paul when he saw in the ignoring of God the source of all moral degradation.

Consequently, the effort to make Greek philosophy figure among the sources of St. Paul's theology has been given up. The Tübingen movement, in this respect as well as in regard to primitive Petrinism, has found itself in a cul-de-sac.

This does not mean that people have given up the quest. The positive system has fallen; the tendencies of the Apostolic age are still the object of study and the source of inferences. And it is ever a tendency trial to which the writings of the New Testament are subjected, though it is granted that the one criterion of Baur does not settle everything. Critics however are no longer satisfied with classing documents according to their tendencies; they appeal to the least particularities in concepts to attribute one Gospel to two or many authors. Since the days of Baur, internal criticism has not ceased to multiply its efforts in every direction; and if it has not reached any system of equal scope, it is because the disintegration of the documents delays indefinitely the formulation of a synthetic view. It is still asked whether it is not thanks to Paul that Christianity took on a seductive aspect for Hellenism. The quest, however, abandoned in the fields of ancient philosophy, now goes on in the more obscure regions of Greek or Oriental mysticism.

But before taking up this last attempt, we shall have to notice in our next lecture a determined effort at conciliatior between radicals and conservatives which appeared for a time to have succeeded.

SEVENTH LECTURE

THE COMPROMISE OF THE LIBERALS

After Baur, we no longer have as a guide in our review of German exegesis the learned master of St. Sulpice, Father Vigouroux. He assigns as his reason for bringing his study to a close with Baur, the fact that rationalistic Germany has since produced no exegete who has opened up new paths in the domain of Biblical criticism [1]. The reviewer, indeed, is now confronted with the difficult task of analysing many books which differ but slightly from one another. This likeness results from the predominance of a certain tendency, and if we have no longer to deal with the distinctive actions of scholars, we are confronted with the collective authority of the universities and with the acquired results of criticism. It will be well to study this situation, before taking up the more creative period of German exegesis which began towards the end of the last century.

I

Orthodox Reaction against Strauss and the Radicalism of Bruno Bauer.

While the Tübingen professors preferred to look for the meaning of Christianity in the writings of

1. *Les Livres Saints*, II, 586.

St. Paul, whom they regarded as its real founder, other professors of exegesis and theology did not think of abandoning the domain of the Gospel.

The book of Strauss had provoked a very clearly defined reaction towards orthodoxy. Protestants were astonished that such boldness should appear legitimate. They reproached Strauss with not having written in Latin, with having laid before the public problems which were too hard for it, — a complaint justified according to Catholic principles, unexpected on the part of Lutherans. As if the Bible were not clear, and as if Luther had not promised to every believer the assistance of the Holy Ghost! The prelates of the Lutheran communities at last understood that Pietism was no sufficient barrier against incredulity, that it made too little of doctrine and the confessions of faith. A neo-Lutheranism was born, for the greater utility of the assertive Prussian state, whose defender it became, especially after threatening events of 1848.

The leader of the movement in the matter of exegesis was Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg [1], of whom M. Lichtenberger has drawn an amusing caricature. His paper, he says, which was " evangelical only in name ", was a " real tribunal of the inquisition " and practiced " with indefatigable perseverance the system of denunciations, of suspicion, of espionage. " Hengstenberg " places on the same footing and confounds in a same anathema

1. Hengstenberg was born in 1802 at Frondenberg, in the county of Mark, and died at Berlin, in 1869. Professor of theology at Berlin from 1826, he founded in 1827 the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*.

pantheistic philosophy and the progress of the cholera, the theology of sentiment and the rehabilitation of the flesh." Finally, indignation reaches its acme : the *Evangelische Zeitung* of the Berlin professor is compared to the *Univers* of Louis Veuillot ! [1]

It is certain that this orthodox Lutheran exegete did not deal gently with the theology of conciliation, which so gravely compromised the principles of the faith. He even hailed with satisfaction the explosion of Strauss's bomb in 1835. It cleared the atmosphere. " Two nations ", he writes in 1836, " are struggling in the womb of our time, and two only. They will be ever more definitely opposed to one another. Unbelief will more and more cast off the elements of faith to which it still clings, and faith will cast off its elements of unbelief. That will be an inestimable advantage. Had the Time-spirit continued to make concessions, concessions would constantly have been made to it in return." [2]

But on what may Protestantism base action against incredulity, when it is the Word of God, its only foundation, that is under discussion? The prophecy of Hengtenberg seemed at first to turn out true; there was a bold manifestation of radical incredulity and this provoked resistence. But the resistence stopped too soon to end in a complete triumph of orthodoxy; the uncompromising attitude of orthodoxy did not restore its dominion over

1. *Histoire des idées religieuses en Allemagne,* by F. Lichtenberger, II, 305 f.

2. Schweitzer, p. 106.

souls. We may take Bruno Bauer as a type of the radicals.

As a sceptic, radical and imaginative, Bruno Bauer left nothing to be desired. Born in 1809 at Eisenberg, in the duchy of Sachsen-Altenburg, he belonged to the Hegelian " right. " He was a professor at Bonn when he began to write. The Life of Jesus by Strauss appeared to him a natural starting-point, because it did away with the need of refuting Rationalism, on the one hand, or supernaturalism on the other. He tried to carry criticism farther, and began with the Fourth Gospel. We have seen that public opinion had constrained Strauss to attenuate his attacks upon this Gospel in his third edition. Bauer took the offensive once more; he saw in the Fourth Gospel only a work of literature, a manifestation of Christian art on the part of a man who had deep religious and intellectual insight and determined purpose, but who was unconcerned about history. And how will the first three Gospels fare? Had they simply registered tradition as Strauss thought? If they had, there remained for the life of Jesus a historical basis however slight; for tradition leans on facts, and in this case on facts which could be set down as sufficiently astonishing to stir the popular imagination in a most extraordinary way. Bauer denied that the first three Gospels recorded tradition. He denied that it is even possible to attribute this creative reflection which produced so determined a movement as Christianity to a mysterious and ill-defined entity, such as the collectivity to which Strauss assigned the primitive dogma and history.

In this he agreed with Catholics; but instead of concluding that the Evangelists had seen the events or listened to witnesses, he suspected in their work an individual intention sufficiently resolute to dispense with the support of facts, and he was inclined to regard the narrative found in the earlier Gospels as no more trustworthy than the Fourth Gospel.

The literary criticism of Weisse, of which we shall speak later on, had given to the Second Gospel the first place in the order of time. Since the First and Third Gospels were based on the Second, there remained, Bauer contended, only one authority instead of four. It was enough to contest the historical value of the one witness to make everything uncertain. Strauss had shaken what may be rightly called tradition; Bauer did not believe in Strauss's creative tradition. What now can be suggested? A writer who perhaps created entirely the personage of the Messias.

Bauer maintained that the expectation of the Messias was much less widespread than is generally thought, at the period when Christianity arose. He pointed out that when Peter repeats to Jesus what the Galileans think of him, [1] no one had had any idea that He might be the Messias. The moment when Jesus of Nazareth was identified with the Messias, the Christian community came into existence. This identification may be attributed to a writer.

Strauss is now far outstripped, and Bauer takes

1. Mk. VIII, 28.

satisfaction in comparing him to Hengstenberg. They do not differ so very much! "For Hengstenberg the whole life of Jesus is the living embodiment of the Old Testament picture of the Messiah; Strauss, a less reverent counterpart of Hengtenberg, made the image of the Messiah into a mask which Jesus Himself was obliged to assume, and which legend afterwards substituted for His real features [1]." In his first works Bauer still admitted a fascinating personality, which the Second Gospel had represented as the Messias, before the Fourth transformed it into the Logos. Later, this personality became indistinct in the mists of doubt.

But the first manner was already too radical for Protestant Germany. Bauer was deprived of his permission to teach in March, 1842. His anger broke forth in a work entitled "Christianity Exposed," which was destroyed before being put on sale. He then interrupted his Scripture studies and turned his attention to the history of France and Germany from the end of XVIII century. When he came back to the Gospel, in 1850, he laid more stress on doubts already expressed about the existence of Jesus, and placed himself at the extreme "left" of the Tübingen school by denying the authenticity of the four great Epistles of St. Paul. Finally, he felt called on to expound his own system. The title of the work is significant: "Christ and the Cæsars: The origin of Christianity from Græco-Roman Civilization." Bauer had traveled far since the time when he thought to save the honor

1. Schweitzer, p. 143.

of Jesus by reconstructing His true history. His disdain for theologians, which went to the extent of a pathological delirium, has turned into hatred of Christianity and of the Romano-Judæan idol which it adored as its Founder. This religion of resignation, of renunciation, of flight from the world, could have come into existence only at a time when the individual felt himself crushed by an immense organism, such as was the Roman Empire. Seneca, in part won over by this passive fanaticism, tried to give it effectual influence by taking control of the government. The discouragement of the Stoics, in which there was mingled a mysticism inherited from Plato, put them upon their way to the sad religion which is attributed to the Gospel which came from Judæa. And, in part, Judea despoiled of its national life by the taking of Jerusalem, experienced the same feeling of oppression. Josephus the historian is the counterpart of Seneca. Philo of Alexandria had prepared the ground; his " Therapeutæ " [1] were forerunners of the Christian communities. The moral soul came from Rome; Judæa furnished the skeleton. Literature took about fifty years to construct the historical framework of the new faith.

More or less conformable to the facts, — and

1. Since St. Jerome's time the question has been discussed whether the groups whose observances Philo has described in his *De Vita Contemplativa* are a society of Jewish monks like the Essenes, or precursors of the Christian monks who later peopled the Egyptian desert. It may be that the description of the writer is largely fictitious.

there is not one of them that is recognized as solid, even the existence of Jesus, — this pretended history had no longer any interest for the man of the XIX century, which conceived otherwise of religion. The personal conscience placed in presence of the world, no longer tried to dominate it by contempt, but to penetrate it and to ennoble it. It is doubtless to inaugurate this religion that Bruno Bauer, a fierce radical in exegesis, fought in the ranks of the Prussian Conservatives until his death in 1882. [1]

II

A German Via Media.

You are astonished, Gentlemen, that I have given so much time to the exposition of opinions so extravagant and with no support in the texts.

The system of Bauer was too much like a novel to inspire confidence. But his criticism has not been without influence. And it was necessary to know the excesses of scepticism to appreciate the

1. This analysis of the ideas of Bruno Bauer is taken from the impartial and nevertheless rather sympathetic study of Mr. Schweitzer, pp. 137-160. These are the works to which he refers: "Criticism of the Gospel History", Bremen, 1840; "Criticism of the Gospel History of the Synoptics", 3 vols., Leipsig, 1841, 1842; "Criticism of the Gospels", 2 vols., Berlin, 1850-1851; "Criticism of Acts", 1850; "Criticism of the Pauline Epistles", Berlin, 1850-1852; "Philo, Strauss, Renan, and Primitive Christianity" Berlin, 1874; "Christ and the Cæsars. The Origin of Christianity from Græco-Roman Civilization", Berlin, 1877.

bearing of the compromise which was to prevail.

Orthodox Lutheran theology has always had, and still has, erudite partisans, though their influence, outside of the University of Erlangen of which Theodore Zahn is the glory, is felt rather by the pastors than by university students.

Between this orthodoxy and radicalism the greater part of theologians and exegetes have endeavored to follow a sort of conciliation theology. Revelation is always respectfully treated by them, spoken of in fact as the source of religious knowledge; but it is almost confounded with reason. Church and State may live peacefully together; Rothe would even persuade the Church to fuse insensibly with the State. The task of reconciling pantheism with the transcendent nature of God does not dishearten them. It does not seem to M. Lichtenberger that there is any reason to choose between the two concepts : " If God is a personal being distinct from the world, such as religious sentiment requires, He has an indelibly transcendent character. And nevertheless God is immanent in the world, as science demands. " The conciliation is difficult; however, the two conceptions are not mutually exclusive. [1]

This convinced adept of the Conciliation Theology confesses that it no longer adheres to the form given it by Schleiermacher whose principle is thus enunciated : " To explain history in the light of the religious conscience, and the religious conscience in the light of history, this is what the Conciliation

1. *Histoire des idées religieuses en Allemagne*, III, 215.

School proposes." [1] It was objected to this program that the religious conscience may help to understand the texts, but it has no right to impose itself upon history. The case of Schleiermacher who started from a personal view of the Christ to write his Life of Jesus, should not be set up as a principle. The appeal must be made to history only. But none of the conciliationists have been able to escape one settled idea; the person of Christ must have a "normative character" for the religious conscience; to recognize this is doubtless the least professors of theology appointed by the Protestant Evangelical State can be expected to do. In dogmatic theology, certain barriers long continued between the Liberal school and the so-called Conciliation school. In exegesis there was only one school, which we may call Liberal. In it there have been divergent shades of opinion; but care has always been taken to avoid the confusion willed by Schleiermacher. The Rationalist explanation, officially set aside, had only changed its method, and the supernatural continued to be relegated to the scrap-heap. Liberals, however, avoided saying so too openly. They wished before all to trace a historical image of Christ. In Him, it was recognized, there appeared the very genius of religion, whatever might be thought of his mysterious personality. Each one thought as he liked about this personality.

In speaking of the compromise of the Liberals, we are not speaking, then, of a philosophico-relig-

1. *Op. l.*, III, 213.

ious synthesis. It even seems that henceforth exegesis will be almost independent of philosophy. Schenkel, who was suspected of heresy, had begun by having Kuno Fischer removed from Heildelberg on account of his pantheism. Professor Harnack pronounces openly against that same monism. Nobody any longer proposes to find in the doctrine of Jesus the symbolical form of the religion of the absolute. The disciples of Hegel, divided into " right " and " left " have inclined towards an entire religious conservatism or towards pure materialism. What was true in the first half of the XIX century is no longer true after 1850. The deviations of exegesis suppose a common philosophy, if by that be understood the denial of the supernatural and of the miracle, together with an abuse of subjectivism, but they are not connected with a particular philosophy. The student of German exegesis would be better advised in turning his attention towards religion in Germany.

Those who comment upon Scripture are professors of the theological faculties. They do not think of breaking with their religious communities. Their intention is rather to guide them in what they consider a fatal evolution. These bold thinkers become very skilful opportunists. They think as they like, but they instinctively agree to keep to an exegesis which German Protestantism can digest.

Between them and the communities there are certainly important divergencies. For the greater number of ministers of the Holy Gospel have preserved much more faith than they in the myste-

ries of Christianity. But if critical science makes the concession of still using terms which have not the same meaning for it and for the general public, the faithful and even the pastors consent not to be too easily scandalized. From time to time they protest. The case of Schenkel is sufficiently significant and well brings out the social and national character of the compromise.

Schenkel's way of presenting Jesus was not more rash than others. Strauss has even reproached him with taking back with one hand in favor of faith what with the other hand he had conceded to criticism. He did not disdain to use the Gospel of St. John, to give to the figure of Jesus depth and sublimity. If objection was raised in the name of history, he answered with a distinction as conciliating as ever casuist has invented : " Jesus was not always thus in reality, but He was so in truth. " [1]

But Schenkel was no longer the same man when there was question of the autonomy of communities, the rights of laymen and universal suffrage in the Church. He waged a noisy and successful campaign which issued in the reunion of an assembly for ecclesiastical reform in 1863. *A Sketch of the Character of Jesus* [2] appeared the following year. The author was then a professor of the University and the Director of the Seminary of Heidelberg. In the Grand-duchy of Baden, one hundred and seventeen clerics signed a protest declaring the author unfitted to hold office as a theological

1. Schweitzer, p. 201.
2. *Das Charakterbild Jesu,* Wiesbaden, 1864.

teacher in the Baden Church. It was particularly demanded that he be removed from his post as Director of the Seminary. A storm broke out all over Germany. It gradually subsided, after Schenkel had pointed out that he had only attempted to set forth one side of the truth. He had related the life of the Christ of history, any one was free to form his own conception of Christ according to his faith. The insurgency of the clerical defender of the rights of the laity could not be punished in the exegete.

This was, according to Mr. Schweitzer, the last sensational agitation of orthodoxy. There were other protests, however, and Professor Harnack did not at first escape irritated manifestations of disapproval on the part of the pastors. But the orthodox have given up hope of preventing liberal professors from teaching in the universities. Orthodoxy is gliding insensibly into the ways opened up to it by criticism. It is thus that harmony, if not intellectual unity, is maintained between the exegesis of the theological faculties and pastoral homilies. Accord is kept up; the embarassment which results from interference is avoided. H. Julius Holtzmann was able to state recently as a point gained by criticism that " no Protestant theologian of note any longer professes the doctrine of the symbols in regard to the two natures of Christ. " [1] It would be unjust to see in this attitude deliberate hypocrisy. The professors of theology are not sceptics

1. *Das messianische Bewusstsein Jesu* (The Messianic Conscience of Jesus), p. 100 (1907).

who hide their play. Their situation requires nothing more than what they do, in dealing with a national religion the tenets of which are so ill-defined. They fulfill, most of the time with indefatigable industry, the task which the State has confided to them.

And why may we not admit that these men, who live in such constant contact with the words of God, come under their influence? Could they be insensible to the pure light which emanates from the Gospel, to the ardor of a St. Paul, to the ever repeated call of the Bible to moral perfection? In any case, as Protestants by birth and education, especially as Germans, they would avoid severing the bond between modern Protestantism and the Bible. Already the union in Prussia of the Lutherans and the reformed tended to the formation of a German Church. If those who form this combination no longer seek redemption in the faith of Christ, Son of God, equal to His Father, they wish to know the life of Jesus, who remains their model, and they express a desire for a new Gospel according to the Liberals.

It is about 1860 that this conception was reached, and that the compromise was arrived at, almost instinctively. The year 1864, that of the Schenkel case, marks one precise date, for it was the year of the publication, delayed until then, of Schleiermacher's Life of Jesus, and of Strauss' second Life of Jesus, addressed to the German people. Nothing better shows than does this latter work the tendency to come to an agreement on a portrait of Jesus that would suit everybody; the former radical, who had

remained isolated with his extravagant theses, had softened down to the point of simply adding another number to the rich collection of the Liberal school. [1]

It remains to say how this school has classed the documents and how it has used them.

III

Liberal Criticism of the Gospels.

The classification of documents belongs to literary criticism. Strauss had, in his first Life of Jesus, constantly opposed the Fourth Gospel to the three first. If he had partially retracted in his third edition, it was, he afterwards said, the result of a momentary aberration. And it is precisely on this point that his study was regarded as decisive. The three first Gospels are called synoptic, because their narratives follow the same lines so closely that they can be arranged side by side in three paral lel columns. The order is not always the same, but, save what St. Matthew has in addition to the narrative of St. Mark and what St. Luke has more or less than the two others, the same events in the same perspective are related by all three. On reading them, one would say that the ministry of Jesus took place in Galilee and that He came to

1. This is true especially of the portrait of Christ, for Strauss would not give up the notion that St. Mark's Gospel is dependent on those of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Jerusalem only to die there. At first sight, it would seem that the whole ministry might have occupied no more than a year.

You know that the Fourth Gospel brings Jesus to Jerusalem in the beginning of His preaching. It is at this time that it places the driving out of the Temple vendors; and it brings Him back to Jerusalem for certain Jewish festivals. According to this account, the ministry would have lasted at least two years and a half. In this frame are placed events which are ordinarily not the same as those of the synoptics [1]. To these differences in the narratives, correspond differences in the way of speaking about Jesus and especially in the way of making Him speak. The peculiarities of St. John in the presentation of the doctrine and of the person of the Savior have always been remarked; Julian the Apostate held that John was the first to affirm that Jesus was God. In the interest of clearness I have had to recall these points which are well known to you; Mgr. Batiffol set them forth here in the Catholic Institute in the year 1897, with precise details which I may pass over in silence. [2]

The older exegesis put the four Gospels on exactly the same footing, both as witnesses to the facts and as echoes of the teaching of Jesus. The Rationalists had preferred the Gospel of St. John,

1. The four Gospels have in common the baptism of Jesus and the multiplication of the loaves; they meet again at the Passion, but in his account of this St. John follows his own way, somewhat different from that of the others.

2. *Six leçons sur les Évangiles*, 10th. ed. in 1907, Paris, Gabalda.

because it contains fewer miracles. Schleiermacher flattered himself that he had drawn from his own conscience a wholly divine image of Jesus; having, doubtless, drawn it from St. John, he found it again in his Gospel; he thought, too, that his miracles had a more far-reaching significance as symbols.

After Strauss, as we have already said, the balance inclines decidedly towards the synoptics. If one had simply examined which of the four Gospels presents itself as the narrative of an eye-witness, gives most attention to the distinction of the events according to time and place, one could not hesitate to choose the Fourth Gospel. But could one treat its author as a well-beloved disciple who had seen his Master at work, and then maintain that he had not understood Him? Renan attempted to do so, but German criticism was, it seems, more clear-sighted in its negations and more attentive in preparing its own defense. The principle being determined that Jesus became God only in the course of time, gradually, as His image grew upon the souls of men, it became impossible to admit that the author of the Fourth Gospel had accompanied Jesus upon the roads of Galilee with His apostles. Critics affected, then, to draw nothing about the life of Jesus from the Fourth Gospel. They were not, however, always consistent in this attitude, especially at first; they did borrow from it certain traits which seemed to them to bring out more clearly the portrait traced by the synoptics and to add to its expressiveness.

Consequently, the critic must take his stand upon the three first Gospels. But could he even do this?

What was their historical value? Had their authors even the intention to give an historical narration? They seemed to confirm one another substantially, but they did not harmonize as regards the order of the events. How explain the agreement and the disagreement?

Gieseler had answered by the hypothesis of the primitive catechesis. [1] Do not confound it with the interpretation of Strauss in which the community creates the myth. The catechesis, or the preparation for baptism, only transmits teaching. The Gospel is the glad tidings of salvation. It must be spread. The Apostles had spread it by proclaiming, in public and in private, that to be saved one must believe in Jesus, who preached the kingdom of God, suffered, and rose from the dead.

The great means to convert souls was to reproduce for the new disciples the preaching which had converted the first. The same things were repeated, in about the same terms. When it was resolved to write down what had been said, the narratives had already assumed a certain definite form. So much for the resemblances of the Synopics. Their differences were due to the individual writers, who arranged this traditional matter, each according to his purpose and temperament.

This still appears the most simple explanation to respectable authorities. [2] That this early cate-

1. *Historisch-kritischer Versuch über die Entstehung der Evangelien* (in the *Analekten* of Keil et Tszchirner, t. III, in 1816).

2. Lebesque, *Nos quatre Évangiles* (Our four Gospels) (1917).

chesis existed is not an hypothesis, but a fact which no one thinks of denying. What is hypothetic, is the explanation of the peculiarities of the written Gospel by the modalities of oral teaching; it is doubted whether it produced the appearance of relationship between the Synoptics.

Their resemblances are not confined to words. It would be strange, indeed, that three writers should have used exactly the same words in cases where it would have been so easy to vary them; variations multiply in a most natural way when writers follow their own bent. But one might admit that the catechists scrupled to change the words for fear of altering the substance. It is possible, though scarcely probable. It is less likely that the narratives automatically, so to speak, grouped themselves into parallel series. Words, especially if they are picturesque, or if they refer to an unwonted event, stick to the memory. But the memory retains much less easily the order of events, when there is no connection between them. With an ordinarily good memory, one might without much difficulty learn to relate each one of the incidents of the Book of Judges. But it would tax the very best of memories to learn the chronological order of the Judges. Now the divergences between the synoptics prove clearly that the primitive catechesis had made no great effort to constitute a chronological history of Jesus. That was not its task. At most one might understand that certain categories of facts were formed : miracles, parables, teaching of the disciples. But this is not the most ordinary case. It seems that

the series were formed only when a writer sketched a life of Jesus; if the order of events is about the same in the three synoptics, it is because two of them accepted the first sketch. There has been, then, a certain literary dependence between the first three evangelists.

Comparing the synoptics with one another, Christian Hermann Weisse maintained, as early as in 1838, in his "Critical and Philosophical Study of the Gospel History," [1] the priority of St. Mark's Gospel. He pointed out that in those parts which the three Gospels have in common, the agreement of the other two is mediated through Mark; that in those parts which Matthew and Luke have in common with Mark they resemble each other more, both in wording and order, than they do in the sections which they have not in common with Mark. What does this mean but that Mark is the reason of the existence of the resemblances between the other two, that they used him? Mark is then the first of the three.

Another argument for the priority of Mark is found in the fact that it is he who relates the events with greatest detail, and that the graphic touches of this Gospel are such as most naturally reflect the first impressions of those who were present when the events occurred. It is, indeed, possible for an able writer to see with the imagination more vividly and realistically than others

1. *Die Evangelische Geschichte, kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet,* Leipzig, 1838. — *Die Evangelienfrage in ihrem gegenwärtigen Stadium,* Leipzig, 1856.

see with their eyes and consequently to give a life-like account of imaginary events, while the narrative of an eye-witness may fail to convey any definite impression of what took place. But Mark was not enough of a literary man to have passed off his inventions for reality by clever writing. He makes his reader assist at the scenes he describes because their traits are drawn according to nature.

He does not claim to be an eye-witness; but he speaks so much about Peter that he indicates him as the source of his information. We are then in contact with the testimony of the faithful friend of Jesus. We can accept this indication, and in spite of Strauss, myths are relegated to a very secondary place. Nothing would prevent us from treating Mark as a historian if he had complied with that law of history which requires that events be arranged according to their order in time. But Mark's chronology is elementary; it contains no definite starting point and few intimations which allow us to measure intervals; and there is no means of knowing that he always followed the order of time in relating the incidents which he gives us. Taken all in all, however, the arrangement of his materials is not devoid of likelihood. His rudimentary history comprises, like so many other dramas of real life, its preparation, its climax and its denouement. It may, then, serve as a basis for the life of Jesus which it is the duty of Liberal criticism to write.

At the same time another primitive foundation was recognized. The discourses common to St. Matthew and St. Luke, more developed in St. Mat-

thew, are sufficiently alike to postulate a common source, since the two evangelists are too divergent to allow the supposition that one borrowed from the other. This primitive source, called the *Logia* (from a wrongly interpreted word of Papias), reproduces faithfully enough the teaching of Jesus, at least as faithfully as Xenophon and Plato reproduce the doctrine of Socrates. Besides these two documents, Mark and the Logia, the elements proper to St. Luke deserve consideration; he must have consulted persons acquainted with the facts, since he affirms that he did so.

We see that this Liberal criticism was inaugurating in its own way a reaction against the mythical interpretation of Strauss; it refused even to discuss the scepticism of Bruno Bauer. It had settled upon solid bases for the history of Jesus, and, despite certain noisy but vain denials, these bases, which one may say are *minimum* foundations, have not been shaken. It is a point to be recalled to a certain uncompromising scepticism, as ignorant as it is radical.

In this rapid sketch, I have simplified matters excessively. There are many divergent opinions among the Liberal critics. The aberration which I find least excusable, is the fiction of a primitive Mark, obtained by the elimination of what is not utilized by St. Luke and also by eliminating certain picturesque details. An example, chosen among a hundred will enable you to realize the lack of taste. Here is the narrative of the tempest calmed in Luke : " One day Jesus entered into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them : Let us go over to the

other side of the lake. And they started. While they were sailing, he fell asleep. There came a storm of wind upon the lake, and they were filling with water and they were in danger. They came to him and awoke him saying : Master, Master, we perish. But he arising commanded the winds and the waves; and they ceased and there was a calm. And he said unto them : Where is your faith? " [1]

Now this little narrative is perfectly clear-cut. All is said simply and soberly. There is nothing more in Mark, nothing more except those expressive touches which change a good likeness into a life-like portrait : " And he saith to them that day, when evening was come : Let us pass over to the other side. And leaving the multitude, they take him, even as he was, in the boat, and there were other boats with him. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filled. And he was in the hinder part of the boat, sleeping upon the cushion. And they awake him and say to him : Master does it not concern thee that we perish? And rising up he commanded the wind and said to the sea : Silence ! be still ! And the wind ceased and there was made a great calm. And he said to them : Why are you fearful? have you not faith yet? " [2]

You have noticed these details : That day, of the parable of the sower; it was evening; there were other boats; they took Jesus as He was, without

1. Lk. VIII, 22-25.
2. Mk. VIII, 35-40.

organizing a caravan; He was at the stern, sleeping upon the cushion upon which the steersman usually sat. These details are useless to the narrative; they are there because they were erstwhile in reality. And that familiarity in the appeal for help, in the reproaches of the Master; that direct word to the wind and to the sea! Will you say that Mark was the greater writer? But his sentence is more broken, his style less careful. If he had been seeking for effect he would have told us of the threatening waves, the whistling of the wind, the horror of a dark night. We have two descriptions of another tempest. One is by Chateaubriand, the second by his servant. Read the "Itinerary" and the story of Julien; you will realize the difference between a style which owes its picturesqueness to the gifts of imagination, to the delicate perception of the beautiful and the horrible, and a style which owes the same quality to a faithful reproduction of details, clearly perceived, though insignificant, trivial or even repulsive, like sea-sickness. These details remained in the imagination of Julien, and he has expressed them naturally, in his naive but sincere style. Did Chateaubriand see what he has expressed in his graphic, though somewhat affected way? It may be doubted; he may simply have wished to write a fine page. But what reason could have induced Julien to tell of a tempest which he had not seen? The philologists who have invented the primitive Mark, the *Urmarkus*, were bookworms; and they did not even know how to read books. Their disciples have sought other reasons for attacking

the unity of Mark; but the theory of primitive Mark loses every day something of its unjustified hold upon scholars of the Liberal school. And this sound reaction of criticism has extended to St. Luke.

The last chapters of the Acts of the Apostles have, as much as the Second Gospel, the life and naturalness which are apt to be found in the narrative of those who have taken part in the events related. And the author says " we, " without affectation, because he belonged to the party of Paul and his companions. [1] Criticism has bowed its head. Here is a witness. Who was it? Why not Luke? But, ever on its guard, criticism, having made this concession, refused to go farther. This " we " of Luke which comes only at the end of Acts, characterizes, it is held, a writing inserted into a later work. The author of the whole work of Acts, who is likewise the author of the Third Gospel, may have written these books long after the composition of Luke's travel-document. Criticism was at this point when, recently, in a series of carefully worked out studies, [2] Professor Harnack showed that the whole of Acts and the Third Gospel came from the same pen. This point is solidly established.

When the Berlin critic adds that the two books

1. The *Wirstücke* begin xvi, 10.

2. *Lukas der Arzt, der Verfasser des dritten Evangeliums und der Apostelgeschichte,* Leipzig, 1906. — *Die Apostelgeschichte,* Leipzig, 1908; cf. *Revue biblique,* 1906, pp. 644 ff. and 1908, pp. 620 ff. (These books are translated, *Luke the Physician, the Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles* and *The Acts of the Apostles,* Putnam's.)

were finished by the year 60, no Catholic has a right to show himself more exacting.

It cannot be said that the reaction has reached the Fourth Gospel. It is true that such considerable scholars as Wellhausen, [1] Schwartz, [2] and Wendt, [3] have tried to discover in it a first and a second hand; but they have no regard for its historical contribution.

Spitta [4] has arrived at this same view concerning a twofold layer in the Fourth Gospel; but he builds up according to a proto-Luke and a proto-John an altogether arbitrary history. The Fourth Gospel resists documentary division. John has not less than Mark the character of an original and organic writing.

One must then choose between the whole and nothing. We have always preferred the whole. And though criticism is still far from this traditional position, it no longer speaks of such late dates as those proposed by Strauss and Baur.

If, then, one were to determine to-day that in which the "right", the extreme "right" if you like, of Liberal exegesis, is distinguished from Catholic

1. J. Wellhausen, *Erweiterungen und Aenderungen im vierten Evangelium*, Berlin, 1907. — *Das Evangelium Johannis*, Berlin, 1908.

2. E. Schwartz, *Aporien im vierten Evangelium*, dans les *Nachrichten von der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol. Hist. Klasse*, Berlin, 1907, pp. 341-372; 1908, pp. 114-188; 497-560.

3. Hans Heinrich Wendt, *Die Schichten im vierten Evangelium*, Göttingen, 1911.

4. Friedrich Spitta, *Das Johannesevangelium als Quelle der Geschichte Jesu*, Göttingen, 1910.

exegesis concerning the origin of the Gospels, one would find that the Liberals are drawing nearer to tradition. For the dates between 60 and 70, I see no divergence between Mgr Batiffol and Father Jacquier on one side, and Professor Harnack on the other. Regarding the date of the Fourth Gospel, around 100, a little before or a little after, everyone is agreed, from Father Cornely to Professor Jülicher. And I cannot believe that moderate critics of the Liberal " left " will long hold out for a date later than 70, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, for the Synoptics.

Discussion is now mainly concerned with the case of St. Matthew, the most difficult of all. While the Liberals continue to distinguish a collection of discourses, in Aramaic or Greek, which would have served as a source of the First and Third Gospels, the Biblical Commission refuses to give a certificate of origin to this collection of which antiquity knew nothing.

The Commission makes a distinction between the primitive work of the Apostle Matthew, written in Aramaic, and the First Gospel in Greek, but it proclaims the substantial identity of the original text and of the translation. This allows one to hold, however, that the Greek translator made use of the Gospel of St. Mark, since St. Mark may be older than the translation. It is the view I take, profitting by the latitude permitted by the word substance. But this is not the question here. I could not, indeed, put before you the documentary conclusions of the Liberal school without indicating what Catholics think about these matters;

but I have not to discuss in detail these views about the basis of the history of Jesus. It is this history itself, according to the Liberals, which we have to analyse, too rapidly, I am sorry to say.

IV

The Jesus of Liberal Theology.

I cannot think of reviewing with you the works, famous in Germany, of Schenkel, of Weizsäcker, [1] of Theodor Keim, [2] of Beyschlag, [3] of Bernard Weiss. [4] I take as a type the writings of Heinrich Julius Holtzmann [5]. He is in about the middle of the school, between Bernard Weiss, more traditional, and Keim, more Liberal. His authority rests upon considerable works : an introduction to the synoptic Gospels, a theology of the New

1. Karl Heinrich Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte, ihre Quellen und den Gang ihrer Entwicklung*, Gotha, 1864.

2. Theodor Keim, *Die Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*, 3 vol., Zurich, 1867-1872.

3. Willibald Beyschlag, *Das Leben Jesu*, in two parts, prolegomena and exposition, 1885-1886.

4. Bernhard Weiss, *Das Leben Jesu*, 2 vol., 1882.

5. Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien. Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter*, Leipzig, 1863. - *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, several editions. - *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 2 vol., Friburg in B. and Leipzig, 1897. Several commentaries in the *Hand-Commentar*; cf. *Revue biblique*, 1897, pp. 468 ff.

Testament, several commentaries. With uncommon diligence he has collected the opinions of others, which seem to form a background to his own. Less known than Harnack in France, he has, so to speak, fixed the position of the Liberal school, the last word of which he had uttered before the attacks of the new critics. And Harnack in his *What is Christianity?* [1] does but clothe the same results with oratorical form. Holtzmann has, then, given definite shape to the Liberal theory. His Life of Jesus is, however, certainly not definitive; it is already very near being abandoned as an integral and exclusive system.

People have, we were saying, broken with the mythological system. The only myths to which the Liberals cling are certain embellishments of legend, inspired by the Old Testament, to mark the accomplishment of prophecies, and some efflorescence of the marvelous about the history of Jesus, such as naturally gathers about all great men. The Infancy narratives of both Matthew and Luke belong to this domain. They are considered as essays of the imagination to fill in the void of the first years of a brilliant existence and to find therein anticipations of future glorious events.

The true history begins with the Baptism. And at once there arises the question which dominates everything. Did Jesus believe Himself the Messias expected by the Jews?

St. Matthew attached great importance to this

1. Adolf Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums,* Leipzig, 1900, numerous editions; cf. *Revue biblique,* 1901, pp. 110 ff.

title, as giving Jesus a claim to the adhesion of His countrymen; but it is very distasteful to Liberals. They do not like to think of Jesus as the Messias, whatever meaning may be attached to the word. There is, as we said in connection with Reimarus, the national and temporal Messiahship, and the Messiahship which is now called eschatological, that is to say, the power to come upon the clouds to judge men. But in either of these senses it is objectionable. To conceive the design to deliver one's people is in itself praiseworthy, but what meaning could it have for us? Is that what Jesus sought to do? The Liberals rightly answer that it is not. But if Jesus is not an ambitious man, or even a hero who sought to realize national hopes, He is not, on the other hand, the enthusiast who would have imagined Himself commissioned to inaugurate upon earth a new world, to transform human life into a dream-life in a dream-land of innocence and happiness. Placed between two equally chimerical hopes, He purified both, endeavoring to better men by teaching them to love God as their Father and other men as their brethren. His Messiahship is an apostolate of the reign of God such as is within reach of every man. The reign of God, according to Harnack's description, is a gift from on high, and not the product of natural life; a religious good, which must affect one's whole existence. The fatherhood of God and the price of the soul, is the second theme of Jesus, a theme so deep, so true, so clear for the religious soul, that it raises Christianity above other religions, makes of it religion itself. Jesus requires also a higher

righteousness, which is not to be placed in exterior worship but in moral dispositions, a righteousness which reaches the bottom of the heart, where it has its root in love and its stay in humility.

As the Jesus of the Liberals, however pure and holy be His religious genius, is only a man, one would be curious to know at what moment He acquired the conviction that His mission was to preach the spiritual messianism. It was at the Baptism; for it was then that Jesus acquired consciousness of his dignity of Son of God, then that He understood that God was a Father and His Father, and that He was His Son. Here, then, Jesus is invested with His mission by His consciousness. He preaches that reign of God which is inner conversion, convinced that He thus plays the part of Messias. But how different the impulses which this title arouses in the multitude, impatient to salute the King-Messias, son of David! This accounts for the Master's care to avoid all revolutionary agitation. He veiled his dignity, even from His disciples.

It is only at Cæsarea of Philip that He accepted their homages, because He had insensibly led them to a higher conception of the reign of God and of the Messias. The confession of Peter has, in the Liberal history of Jesus, a sovereign importance. It is the climax of His whole career. Henceforth His messianic ideal dominates Him more and more, but He understands at the same time that the multitude will not accept it. Understanding nothing of a spiritual transformation, the crowds, for a moment over-excited, abandon this lowly

preacher who has not been able to meet their enthusiastic expectations. Jesus now knows that His enterprise will succeed only through suffering and death. He tries to bring His disciples to this higher degree of His divine vocation; He leads them to Jerusalem where the solution of God is to intervene. What solution? We are here at the delicate point where it is necessary to define the sentiments of Jesus in regard to eschatological dreams.

Is it likely that a sage like Jesus, so humble and religious, who had refused to encourage the temporal hopes of the Jews, should have leaned at the end towards that other messianism, still more chimerical, which awaited salvation from a catastrophic intervention of God? Did He think that if He, the Messias, could inaugurate His reign only by His death, the entire wicked world was to disappear with Him and to be replaced immediately on earth by a wholly divine world? The Liberal school does not think so, and it is here that it is distinguished from the school of the Eschatologists. In the beginning, without overmuch exegetical study, the Liberals eliminated the embarrassing texts by interpreting them in a spiritual sense. But when the battle was engaged with the new adversaries, the texts had to be discussed closely and their meaning defined exactly. The discussion revolves chiefly around the title of Son of Man. The Liberals ridded themselves of the title of Son of God by interpreting it in the most trivial way, but what was to be done with the title of Son of man which Jesus so frequently applied to Himself, and which must reveal the secret of His messianic

consciousness? We read almost in the same terms in the three synoptics that when the High Priest asked Jesus: "Art thou the Christ, the son of the blessed (God)?" Jesus answered: "I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." [1] Does this not mean: "I am the Messias foretold by Daniel, a Messias who is to reign near God and come to judge the world?"

The Liberals are embarrassed by this text. Many, and among them Holtzmann and Harnack, concede that Jesus believed in His reign near God, but without imagining that by reason of this reign the human race was to be transformed upon earth.

Others fear that this concession will draw them too far, and they see no necessity for it. Adalbert Merx, for instance, would not grant that Jesus claimed to be the Messias.[2] According to Wellhausen, Peter and the people believed Jesus to be the Messias; He let them think so, but we do not know exactly what was His own thought. This eminent orientalist has affirmed with all the weight of his thorough knowledge of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, that son of man or *barnacha* signifies simply man, that this term becomes in the Gospel

1. Mc. XIV, 61 s.

2. *Die vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihrem ältesten bekannten Texte,* Uebersetzung und Erläuterung der syrischen im Sinaikloster gefundenen Palimpsesthandschrift, Translation, Berlin, 1897; Explanations on Mark et Luke, Berlin, 1905, p. 82 et p. 161. As the German title indicates, Merx had the happy thought to translate the Syriac Ms. found at Sinai by Mrs. Lewis, but also the aberration to regard this text as nearer than any other to the originals.

almost synonymous with " I who speak to you. " [1]

Despite these fluctuations and these fissures, the Liberal school succeeded in preserving for over half a century a historical residue of the Gospel. The image which it retained of Christ satisfied the general desire not to break with Him, and it obliged nobody to render to Him any other worship than that rendered to great men. Alexander Severus had given a place to Jesus alongside of Orpheus and the heroes in his domestic chapel; Liberal Protestantism, more respectful, set Him apart, upon a high pedestal.

We need not hesitate to say that it was a service to exegesis to banish the interpretation of Strauss, which changed nearly the whole contents of the Gospels into myths, to maintain so strongly the moral and religious character of the teaching of Jesus, to place Him in a sphere in which He was superior to the prejudices of His time and to His time itself and in which He prepared a real regeneration of mankind, ever at the disposition of the men of the future. But is this Jesus, this good professor of moral theology, this respected president of a conference of pastors, this useful auxiliary of the State in its endeavor to bring up German children along the paths of virtue, the Jesus of the Gospel? With the Liberal school we will maintain against the Eschatologists that He had the design of forming a spiritual religion, built upon the foundations of Judaism, but purer and more full of trust

1. *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 39; Berlin, 1905. See for the messianic sense, TILLMANN (Catholic), *Der Menschensohn*; cf. *Revue biblique*, 1908, pp. 280 ss.

in the Heavenly Father. Is this all? Is this, even for one who leaves aside the question of the divinity of Jesus, the impression conveyed by the Gospels? Renan protested against the Liberal Christ, simply in the name of exegesis and history. His keen criticism of the portrait which the German Liberals had drawn deserves to be quoted here : " Strange to say, it is the Liberal school of theology which proposes the most sceptical conclusions. Their sensible apology of Christianity is doing away with all the historical circumstances of Christianity. Miracles, messianic prophecies, erstwhile the basis of Christian apologetics, have become for it an embarrassment; it seeks to eliminate them... Jesus did not even claim to work a single miracle; He did not consider Himself the Messias... A learned man who has been mingled with these discussions, recently wrote me : " As formerly one must show at any cost that Jesus was God, to-day the theological school has undertaken to prove, not only that He was nothing more than a man, but that moreover, He looked upon Himself as such. They would present Him as the sensible man, the eminently practical man; they transform Him after the likeness and according to the heart of modern theology. I believe with you that this is not doing justice to historical truth, that it is neglecting an essential side of it. "

Renan added : " Scholten and Schenkel would maintain, indeed, a historical and real Jesus; but their historical Jesus is neither a messias, nor a prophet, nor a Jew. One does not know what He wanted : one understands neither His life nor

His death. Their Jesus is an aeon in His way, an impalpable, intangible being. "

" Pure history does not know such beings. [1] "

You will have noticed that this satire, so quiet but so biting, refers especially to those Liberals (the greater number at the time Renan wrote) who did away almost entirely with the Messiahship of Jesus. And it was, indeed, the only logical thing for them to do. The middle school found itself threatened on two sides. The consistent Eschatologists were not satisfied with its concessions. And on the other side, Wrede cruelly pointed out their inconsistencies. To remove the miraculous elements, to choose between different Gospel texts, to combine things which are psychologically likely, is not to write history. Liberal critics lean chiefly on Mark. If only they had read him! Wrede misses no chance to show that, according to Mark, Jesus is a supernatural being, His mission divine, His action mysterious, and that in this Gospel nothing marks progress or change in Jesus' mind, so that there is already in Mark much of the doctrine of John. [2]

1. In Lévy, *D. F. Strauss,* p. 223, note 2.

2. *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums.* (The Messianic Secret in the Gospels. Forming a contribution also to the understanding of the Gospel of Mark). By D. W. Wrede, Ordinary Professor of Evangelical Theology at Breslau, 8°, comprising XIV, 292 pp. Gottingen, 1901. The *Revue biblique* (1903, p. 625, ff.) called attention to the importance of this work. It appeared such to Schweitzer that the first title of his book, which we have so frequently quoted, was *Von Reimarus zu Wrede.* This was exaggerating the significance of both names.

If all this, clearly what Mark intended to say, be removed, there remains no reason to hold that Jesus believed Himself the Messias. Since Mark, far from being an historian, does but reflect the faith of the community, he cannot serve as a basis for history. We here fall back into the exaggerations of Bruno Bauer, senseless as a positive system, redoubtable as the *reductio ad absurdum* of an arbitrary method. The petulant but excessive attack of Wrede did not much affect Liberal exegesis. Other attacks left it less indifferent. They will be the subject of our next lecture.

EIGHT LECTURE

THE DISCOVERY BY JOHANNES WEISS OF ESCHATOLOGICAL MESSIANISM.

We left the Liberals in an embarrassing situation. They had been endeavoring to write a life of Jesus, according to the canons of historical criticism, which would allow men of the end of the XIX century to recognize Him as their Master. Using St. Mark's Gospel as their principal source, they pictured Jesus as endowed with purest religious genius and wholly intent on improving the religious and moral life of others; as teaching a doctrine in which mankind could still find the principles of a better life; as impelling men to adore God as a Father and to seek for the advent of His reign within their soul. This Liberal view eliminated everything in the mysterious person of Jesus which rose above the level of human nature. Jesus was not a Messias who was to found a visible and external reign of God; He did not possess supernatural powers; He was not the Son of God. But in these denials Liberals were in reality rejecting claims which Jesus Himself had made according to their own carefully selected documents. Wrede charged that for them even St. Mark did not really count. He contended very forcibly that " each critic retains whatever portion of the traditional sayings can be fitted into his construction of the

facts and his conception of historical possibility and rejects the rest. " [1] He pointed out that if one denies that Jesus claimed to be the Messias, His life and His death cease to be intelligible. A step further and His very existence will be denied; some skeptics were ready to take this step.

While the Liberal school was wrestling with these extremists, whose attacks were based chiefly on literary grounds, it was vigorously assailed from another side. In 1892, Johannes Weiss, son of Bernhard Weiss, published a short pamphlet of 67 pages which was, among the erudite, little less resounding than Strauss's Life of Jesus. It was entitled " The Preaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God. " In the name of historical criticism Johannes Weiss declared war upon modern theology. He expresses his mind very clearly in the foreword of his second edition in 1900. Modern theology, he says, has long since introduced into the Gospel the ideas of Ritschl which are at bottom only a residuum of the " Enlightenment " and of the system of Kant. Now Jesus was not the man imagined by those moderns, who fail to project themselves back into the past. Jesus was a man of His own times; the hopes which dominated Him were the hopes of His contemporaries. Every one then expected an intervention of God which would cause an era of innocence and happiness to replace the domination of evil; and such must have been the reign of God which Jesus announced. He did not found it, He only heralded its near coming; He

1. Schweitzer, p. 331.

did not bring it about by His action, He waited for God to establish it by an unheard-of miracle. Was He, then, only a prophet? He was conscious of being much more, of being the judge who would pass sentence upon the good and the bad, and reign in God's name over the elect. The reign of God belonged to the future; He was the future Messias. [1]

Weiss, then, divests Jesus of the garb of a Liberal-Protestant pastor. He pictures Him as living and breathing only in the expectation of the intervention of God, of the salvation of which He Himself was to be the agent, as wholly immersed in the supernatural. There is in this thesis so true a feeling of the heavenly elevation of Jesus, and at the same time so plausible an effort to place Him in His historical environment, that more than one Catholic applauded whole-heartedly when another book, " The Gospel and the Church " of M. Loisy, contrasted the Jesus of the new school with the Liberal Jesus of Harnack. On second thought, it was realized that the new representation of Our Lord was farther than the old from the portrait before which Catholics say their prayers. For at least the Liberal Jesus had worked for us, whereas the Jesus of Johannes Weiss was absorbed by the one idea of the future reign of God, bringing history to an end and inaugurating a new and supernatural world. He did not think of the Church; there was no need of a Church. For the present world was near its end; all in His teaching as well as in His life was dominated by the imminence of

1. See the *Revue biblique*, 1904, pp. 106 ff.

the supreme event. This is, as defined by the new school, the meaning of eschatological, which signifies "relative to the end." Eschatological messianism is that which dreams of the inauguration of heaven upon earth, all history being terminated.

We are now in presence of a very living system, upheld with passionate ardor. Its exponents emphatically claim that it is purely objective, not influenced by confessional prejudices, characterized by that independence which is necessary for historical studies. They affirm that Jesus must have had in mind the conceptions of His time, and they are perfectly confident that they know what these conceptions were. Their new light is supposed to be derived from the study of ancient writings hitherto either unknown or not understood. Insistence is laid upon decisive texts, which must be taken literally, in their evangelical context, and resolutely disengaged from pious traditional subterfuges. It is extremely difficult to escape the confusion created by the word eschatological; for with what was Jesus concerned if not with the last things?

It is the privilege of new doctrines, presented with erudition and with art, to be seductive; and many of our contemporaries are still under the spell of the Eschatologists. Like all good constructions, the system is inherently plausible; its sponsors have some striking texts upon which they base it, and they do not devote much attention to the texts which tell the other way. In order to pass a reasonable judgment upon this system, one has to consider all its aspects, while even a clear analysis

of the Eschatologist position is rendered difficult by lack of clearness on the part of many of its defenders.

I

The Eschatological system as presented by A. Schweitzer.

To make sure of doing justice to their point of view, I shall borrow my analysis from Albert Schweitzer, who has applied it to the life of Jesus. He is convinced that we have at last the key to the enigma presented by the soul of Jesus, by His life and by His death. We may discuss his views, although he makes the discussion easier for himself by absolutely eliminating St. John and by taking no account of St. Luke. But, at any rate, he admits this principle, which should be evident for all, that the portrait of Jesus according to St. Matthew is that of very powerful individuality; and that no anonymous group of believers, desiring to justify their faith (a faith which is, besides, not accounted for), could have succeeded in creating such a personage. There is, indeed, religious conviction in the Gospel, there is therein a dogma which deemed itself superior to the natural course of things. But if this dogma had not been in the mind of the Master, it would not have issued from the brain of his disciples. Why should not Jesus have thought as dogmatically and made history as actively as a poor evangelist constrained by a com-

munity-theology to do this on paper? If the disciples had thought themselves authorized to modify His thought, to introduce into it their preoccupations, their rites and their institutions, it would have been very easy to ascribe to Him long discourses on such topics as the Church, the relation of the Church to the Synagogue, the worship due His person. But He is represented as speaking very little on these subjects, and very much on the Reign which was to come. Tradition has very faithfully transmitted His thoughts and His words, His supernatural dogma. This is the last condemnation of Strauss. Every one in his place. The disciple is not above the Master.

Let us see what, according to Mr. Schweitzer, Jesus' dogma is. Jesus enters into history when He brings into Galilee the announcement of the imminent reign of God. From whom has He received this belief? Perhaps from the Baptist. One might say as well that it was in the air. He knew that He would personally belong to the kingdom of God, with His elect and the angels; and as the son of David, it would be His privilege to be its Messias. Was this Messianic consciousness the result of a vision at the Baptism, as the Liberal school says? Schweitzer rightly doubts it, for this is not the sense of tradition.

Jesus, then, thinks Himself the Messias, son of David. But at the time, and ever since the appearance of the Book of Daniel, another savior was expected, namely, the Son of Man who was to come upon the clouds of heaven to establish the reign of God. Could Jesus be both the Davidic

Messias and the Son of Man? Yes, it sufficed to grant an earthly existence to the Son of Man prior to the performance of the function which properly belonged to Him; since the reign of God was to change all the values of the present time, the Son of David, living in a modest condition, might hope to become the Son of Man at the coming of the reign of God. The two vocations might be united in one person.

According to Liberal theology, a Davidic descent was forged for Jesus after He had been recognized as the Messias. But, says Mr. Schweitzer, what becomes of the affirmation of St. Paul, who was so little concerned about the human existence of the Christ [1]? One would rather say that Jesus thought He was the Messias because He was the son of David. He could very well know it, and it was known by those about Him; the Syrophenician woman [2] and the blind man of Jericho [3] called Him son of David.

Again, according to the Liberal solution, Jesus would have believed Himself Messias because He felt Himself a son of God in a preeminent degree. It is more simple and more appropriate to say that He believed Himself Messias because He was the son of David, at a time when the Messias was expected.

But while it is natural enough that Jesus should have believed Himself to be the Messias because He

1. Rom. I, 3.
2. Mt. xv, 22.
3. Mk. x, 47 f.

was the son of David, it is very strange that others, knowing that He was the son of David, had no idea that He was the Messias. The reason, Mr. Schweitzer says, is that people no longer looked for an earthly, national Messias; they thought only of the Son of Man coming upon the clouds. We shall revert to this point. Another astonishing thing is that Jesus carefully conceals His Messiahship. Why He should, is not easy to say if one accepts the new system. We explain that His concealment was due to His desire to avoid arousing the enthusiasm of the multitude for a national Messias, an enthusiasm which might produce a revolution and, moreover, divert men's attention from God and His reign. But if Jesus was only the future Messias of the reign of God, why hide the fact? Mr. Schweitzer can only conjecture that Jesus held as a dogma the obscurity of the Messias, or that perhaps He did not wish to convert those to whom the Kingdom was not destined! Jesus would have preached like one who does not wish to be too clear, nor too demonstrative. Such a view is in sharp contrast with the more obvious notion one gets in reading the Gospels that Jesus was a prophet who had come to cast fire upon the earth! But, anyhow, we must be grateful to Mr. Schweitzer for having given some activity to the Christ. Johannes Weiss had represented Him as a passive pretender, solely preoccupied about the sudden and decisive coming of God.

This intervention of God Jesus confidently expected for the time of the coming harvest. This is the reason He called attention to seed-sowing

and to the harvest in the parables of the reign of God. Time was short. He felt it urgent to address to the people a supreme appeal, and, as He could not be everywhere, He sent His Apostles. Here we find brought back with honor this Mission of the Twelve so often banished from history by the Liberals. Schweitzer does not wish even a line to fall from the recommendations of Jesus recorded by St. Matthew. Everything contained in the Mission address was spoken, in the very circumstances indicated. The Apostles were charged to announce not only that the reign of God was near at hand, but that it was upon them. Men must do penance. And Jesus was so sure of entering upon the scene to inaugurate the reign that He says expressly : " Amen I say to you, you shall not finish all the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man come. " [1]

This prediction was not fulfilled. The Apostles returned joyful, but the world went on as ever. This determined a change of attitude in Jesus. He withdrew with His disciples, and, that they might be undisturbed. He left Galilee and turned towards the north. What were now His thoughts?

He had long known that the crisis of salvation involved trials. The Messias would appear to save the good only at the moment when there would be no hope left. This is why the disciples were to say not only : " Thy kingdom come, " but " Lead us not into temptation, " that is to say, let us not be involved in the hard trials which will precede

1. Mt. x. 23.

deliverance. If the great harvester had let His sickle fall from His hand, it was because the grain had not yet ripened in the sun of tribulation; there was something lacking in the messianic woes. [1] And why should not the Son of Man Himself be called upon to serve, to suffer, to die, before being transformed in glory? Jesus understood what God asked of Him. Penance must precede the Reign. The people had not done penance. He would atone for the people. He knew it, confided it to His disciples, and announced to them at the same time His resurrection.

This is at least logical. The Liberals see a later addition to the Gospel on the triple prophecy made by Jesus of His passion and resurrection. It is, indeed, inexplicable to them that Jesus should all at once have had the presentiment that it was His destiny to die before His mission was accomplished. Because the people was abandoning Him? But nothing is said of this in the Gospel. Whenever He comes into contact with the multitudes, He finds them curious to hear Him, eager to follow Him. It was particularly unfitting that the sage of the Liberals should prophesy His resurrection. But according to the Eschatologists Jesus believed Himself Son of Man. To play this part He must be transformed into a supernatural being, during life or after death. It must be admitted that Schweitzer is faithful to the conditions he has set himself. The resurrection of Christ is a dogma, say the

1. On the Messianic Woes, see the Commentary on St. Mark by the present writer, on Mk. XIII, 8.

Liberals; therefore it cannot be referred to in the words of the historical Jesus. It is a dogma, says Schweitzer; therefore Jesus' words about it must be historical. Jesus believed in the dogma of the Son of man. But the system is less coherent in regard to the Passion. Jesus speaks of a death following a judgment passed by men. He will not, then, be carried off by the whirlwind of the Messianic crisis? If his death will have for its effect to preserve others, we are no longer in the dogma of the catastrophic coming of the Reign. Where did Jesus get His particular views? In Isaias, says Schweitzer, in the chapter concerning the suffering Servant, who atones for the sins of the people. At the moment when Jesus affirms eschatology, He abandons it!

At least He dominates it. But we shall have to see what the multitude thought. Let us continue to follow Mr. Schweitzer's exposition. Jesus revealed his mind to His disciples only after Peter had penetrated His secret, and declared Him Messias in presence of the others. As a reward the Master said to him: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I shall build my Church." [1] These words, which had always been ill-sounding to Protestant ears and which had been travestied as much as possible by Luther himself, the Liberals had simply cut out of the Gospel. Schweitzer keeps them in the Gospel, but tortures them anew. Why? Because Jesus could not speak to Peter of a community of the faithful which He did not contem-

1. Mt. xvi, 18 f.

plate; His Church must be the preexisting Reign of God, in which Peter will have full power. Must we understand then, that the Messias proposed to build upon Peter a Church which already existed in heaven?

As for the multitude, it could not, any more than the Baptist, suspect that Jesus was the Messias; for the Messias was to be a supernatural personality, manifested at the end of time, and He was not expected upon earth before the great day. The miracles of Jesus, whatever may have been their nature, were not a Messianic attribute. They were not, either, the works of an ordinary person. Jesus must be a prophet, doubtless Elias, announced as the precursor of the Messias; it is as such that he was enthusiastically greeted by the people of Jerusalem on the day of the Palms.

Jesus, however, now thinks only of dying. He warns His disciples to watch, to be on their guard; He provokes His adversaries by driving out the Temple vendors and afterwards by a vehement discourse against the Pharisees. He almost constrains them to rid themselves of Him. They must, nevertheless, have proofs that He pretended to be the Messias. This is the secret that Judas sold them. But his testimony stood alone. Other grievances were sought for. As they could find nothing to justify a condemnation, the High Priest decided to solicit an avowal. Jesus affirmed that He was to come as Son of Man upon the clouds. It is for this reason He died.

II

CRITICISM OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SYSTEM CONCERNING THE REIGN OF GOD.

This is, indeed, a consistent system. But from the believer's point of view, the gain is not great. Instead of a sage, a deluded enthusiast is proposed. Since we are obliged to discuss what is said of the person of our adorable Savior, I must say that I prefer, in the first place, that His own affirmations about the supernatural character of His person be recognized. We come nearer to the old exegesis of the Church, and that is something.

Yes, it is something to restore their bearing to those texts in which Jesus, in all things so humble and so mild, places His rank at a supernatural height, as He does when He traces the rules of morals on the mountain, when He promises the kingdom of heaven to those who are persecuted for His sake, when He forgives sins, when He promises His disciples that they shall reign with Him. And He does all this from the beginning, without any fluctuation of thought, without that psychological transformation which the Liberals had imagined in order to cause Jesus to be received as any other personage of history.

This is the testimony which Jesus renders to Himself; it is not the product of a community of faithful creating the object of their faith. Jesus claims firmly to be the king of the future world.

After listening to Him, let men say, if they choose, that He was mistaken. We prefer having the dilemma put to souls in all its clearness; His words should not be obscured by an exegesis which tones them down through a feeling of false respect. Jesus believed Himself called to be the head of the reign of God. We maintain even that He declared Himself the Son of God, one with His Father. This is very strange. But it is certainly stranger still that He drew after Him so many who shared His conviction. Others have set forth analogous pretentions, but He is the only one who has been believed. History has only to register the fact. The Liberals protest that Jesus was too wise to come under such a delusion. They extol His modesty, His clearsightedness, and His pure religious sentiment. And this, too, is in the Gospel. We conclude that both the system of the Eschatologists and that of the Liberals has a part of the truth; that we must unite what is true in both systems; that Jesus was conscious of His dignity and that He was not deluded.

The Eschatologists say that Jesus' whole life was dominated by eschatology.

This word, we have said, signifies what relates to the end. Now, there is an end for each man, which is death; and for those who admit the immortality of the soul, there is an existence beyond this end. For Israel, moreover, there was another end; those who had awaited the Messias had looked for Him in that future which would be the end and the sequel of the times in which they lived. If Eschatologists mean to say that Jesus expected

of God a supernatural intervention, connected with His person, to inaugurate new times, before the death of men then living, we readily agree with them. When they add that He foresaw His expiatory death as a necessary means to enter into His Messianic glory, we again think as they do. Where, then, is the abyss that separates us?

It does not appear wide, but it is very deep. According to the new system, the supernatural reign of God which Jesus announced as about to begin during the lifetime of His contemporaries is a reign of absolute innocence and happiness. The end of the world and the general judgment were at hand. The part of the Messias was not to better mankind, to reconcile it with God, to put it in condition to serve Him more perfectly, to recruit for His Kingdom. He was to appear immediately after His death as a judge. The reign of God was to be set up as a whole and suddenly in the perfection which it already has in heaven, and the rôle of the Messias was to inaugurate it. Jesus preached this imminent reign and believed Himself its future Messias. Such are the two columns of the system.

Upon what do they rest? Every great figure of history, it is said, must be explained according to its time. If Jesus went beyond the eschatological concepts of the Jews, it is not by changing such or such a piece of the machinery, it is by putting all in motion by His religious and moral force; He made functional ideas received by all.

Before submitting to you conclusions against this system, which is, I think, of German origin, I am glad to say that the three German scholars who are

best qualified in these studies, Wellhausen, Schürer and Bousset, have pronounced decidedly against the view taken by the Eschatologists concerning the Jewish state of mind in the time of Our Lord.

The sophism (the word is not too strong) of the Eschatologists consists, first, in representing the Jewish people as holding one simple view concerning the reign of God and the rôle of the Messias, and, secondly, in attenuating the divergencies between the conceptions of the Jewish people and those of Jesus.

Now, in reality, the Jews distinguished between a reign of God on earth and the Kingdom of God in the world beyond the grave; the Messias was to be the head of the reign of God on earth. And, whatever divergencies there might be, they were absolutely unanimous on the point that the Messias was to assure the triumph of Israel. As for Jesus, He manifestly made a distinction between the reign of God which was about to come and the kingdom prepared for His elect. He regarded Himself as the head of this reign and of this kingdom. But He said very clearly that the reign which was about to come would not be that of Israel. Rather, the judgment of Israel was to inaugurate the reign, as the judgment of all was definitely to inaugurate the kingdom.

Let us now see separately what regards the reign and what regards the Messias.

The reign of God is one of the leading ideas of the Old Testament. That the god of each people is its king has been believed by very many men. In Greece and in Italy the power of the prince had not

had enough prestige to recommend it as a dignity for a god. But it was otherwise in the Orient. What is particular in the case of Israel, is that its monotheism naturally involves universal monarchy. Without ceasing to be the king of Israel, God is the king of the world and especially the king of heaven. When Jews began, at Alexandria it seems, to reason about the destiny of the faithful departed, they placed them near the throne of God, associated with Him in the exercise of His royal power. [1] The right of the king of heaven was incontestable. But men submitted to it more or less. And He, on His part, acted with more or less power to bring about His recognition as Savior and as Master. Miraculous interventions are already the theme of the Book of Judges according to the rhythm : sin, repentance, salvation. By His victories God was strengthening His reign. Then the conquests of the Persians and those of Alexander had inaugurated universal empires such as had been unknown in ancient times. In the Book of Daniel the succession of empires ended in the dominion of the saints, which was to be the reign of God :

" And the reign and the power, and dominion over the kingdoms under all heaven will be given to the saints of the Most High, whose reign is an eternal reign, and all powers will serve Him and obey Him. " [2]

These were very general doctrines, which every one interpreted in his own way. There were two

1. Wisdom, III, 7 ff., V, 15 f.

2. Dan. VII .27 ; see *Revue biblique*, 1904, p. 498.

themes, according as more or less room was given to the action of God. The theme which most emphasized God's action represents God as miraculously doing everything, and in a sudden, complete way, by a radical transformation of the conditions of existence.

This excessive form, which leaves men in a quietistic passivity, is hardly to be found anywhere except in the *Assumption of Moses*, a little work which may be dated in the year 10 B. C. The hero of this story proposes to his seven sons to withdraw to a cavern there to die; God will avenge them :

Then His reign over all creation shall appear,
then the devil shall have his end,
and sorrow shall be taken away with him,
then shall be invested with his charge the angel,
who is set at the summit,
who immediately shall avenge them of their enemies...
Then thou shalt be happy, Israel,
and thou shalt mount upon the neck and the wings of the eagle...
And God shall raise thee up
and set thee in the starry heaven. [1]

Allusions to the action of God of a marvelous kind might be multiplied; but it should be observed that in these writings which represent the apocalyptic mode of visions, the technical term " reign of God, " or its equivalent, " reign of heaven " is *never* found.

On the contrary, in those which represent the

1. *Le Messianisme*, p. 119.

other mode, that of orthodox or rabbinic Judaism, we find very often the expression « reign of heaven, » the word heaven being chosen to avoid pronouncing the sacred name of God. Differently from the apocalyptists, in the Targums and the Michna or Talmuds the scribes make the reign of God dependent on the good will of men. The right of God comes, of course, from His nature, but He must be recognized. On the day of his call, Abraham chose the reign of God, and in the *Sifre* we read in plain words : " Before our father Abraham was in the world, God was king only in heaven; but when Abraham came, he made Him king in heaven and on earth. " [1] After Abraham, the people of Israel made God reign by taking Him as their king. The just must acknowledge, accept, take upon themselves the sovereignty of God; this is the way to cause Him really to reign.

Again, this is an extreme form of the concept of the reign of God, and we do not maintain that it was the only one that was spread in Israel in the time of Jesus. But it has too many roots in Judaism, it is too conformable to the Pharisaic mind such as is combated by St. Paul, not to have figured among the doctrines of the time. It goes without saying that the acknowledgment of the reign of God bettered conditions in the world without changing them completely; according to the teaching of the masters of Israel, the supreme point was faithfully to observe the law and to spread the knowledge thereof in order to merit

1. *Le Messianisme*, p. 152.

a participation in the world to come. But by this, in the time of Jesus, they certainly meant the existence of the just with God after death. The Psalms of Solomon, written in the spirit of the Pharisees of about 40 B. C., clearly attest this predominant preoccupation. Now the Israelites, in Galilee and at Jerusalem, followed blindly the doctrines of the party of the Scribes and Pharisees; Josephus says so openly, and the Gospels attest it.

Let us take note of this fact, which will perhaps not fit in with received opinions. The teaching of the Scribes, nationalistic as it was, was less so than the tenets of the violent messianists. The Scribes aroused the will, — without, it is true. taking God's help sufficiently into account, — preached moral conduct, urged the Gentiles to observe the Law; but the greater number of the Pharisees raised no opposition against the yoke of Herod, nor against that of the Romans, whose domination appeared to them willed by Providence. Their tendencies were optimistic, they did not yet despair of the present world, as people did in the time of the IV book of Esdras and of the apocalypse of Baruch, after the taking of Jerusalem.

On the contrary, the visionaries, very sure of their right to the help of God, do not speak of progressive amelioration; they call upon the Lord to avenge Israel, and give vent to the most rancorous hatred of their adversaries. Sometimes Israel is not named; the fight is between the good and the bad, but the good are always the chosen part of Israel. If they call for divine intervention, it is because the situation appears to them desperate.

They require a triumph, complete and immediate, and in favor of Israel.

Once more, between the two extreme opinions, there is a whole scale of gradations. The error of the Eschatological system is precisely that it does not take them into account, and that it regards the opinion of the visionaries as the reigning opinion, as an opinion so predominant that Jesus, speaking of the reign of God, would not need to explain what it was. They take it for granted that everybody would connect the idea with a catastrophe. — Divine, sudden, complete. Now, we have just seen that this so-called reigning view was only that of some groups; this is so true that until very recently there were found no traces of it in history.

But Jesus might have given His approval to an isolated opinion. Did He believe that the world was about to come to an end, that God had resolved not to ameliorate the world but to replace it with the reign of absolute righteousness which He (Jesus) was to inaugurate on earth as Messias?

The new system says that He did so believe, and it makes its affirmation to rest on what is called the eschatological discourses of the Savior. We have seen the use made by Schweitzer of the instruction for the mission of the Apostles in St. Matthew. The difficulty presented by the discourses on the taking of Jerusalem and the end of the world is still more famous. [1]

I confess that for my part I do not know how to solve either difficulty if the order in which the

1. Mk. XIII, 5-37.

words of Christ are given be considered as inviolable, as attested by the Holy Ghost. What can we answer to the objection based on the words from Jesus' charge : " You shall not finish all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come? " The Apostles returned, and the Son of Man had not yet manifested Himself. He had of course come upon earth, but this was before the mission of the Apostles; Jesus was speaking of His glorious manifestation. It did not take place before their return. This is, you remember, the objection which Reimarus judged sufficient to ruin Christianity, so clearly does it set forth a fact which shows that the words of its Founder cannot be relied upon.

St. Matthew does not say that the disciples returned to their Master. This is doubtless because the Evangelist felt that the mission discourse went far beyond the horizon of the Galilee mission. And, indeed, it contains recommendations which relate only to the times which will follow the death of Jesus : " You shall be brought before governors and before kings, for my sake... " Neither St. Mark nor St. Luke have this passage. We know that St. Matthew has several of those long discourses in which he groups divers sayings which, we know from St. Luke, were uttered on various occasions. He has done this here. Will criticism, which is so bold in its rearrangements and suppressions of traditional elements, regard it as a crime that we discern here two instructions combined into one discourse? And we shall apply the same solution to the eschatological discourse represented as pronounced within sight of Jerusalem,

announcing the ruin of the city and the coming of the Son of Man. [1] In a saying preserved by St. Matthew and by St. Luke, [2] Jesus said to the holy city : " Your house shall be left to you desolate "; consequently Jerusalem shall be ruined and remain ruined. There is no question of supernatural transformation. The punishment of the city will be part of the judgment of God, at the moment when He will establish His reign. But the world will not for this reason be replaced by the kingdom of the elect and by Gehenna. There are here two perspectives which have been brought together only by a common conception of the judgment of God.

This explanation, suggested by the contexture of the passages, agrees perfectly with the whole attitude of Jesus. There is nothing in His conduct which suggests the desperate pessimism and the fierce patriotism of those who expected the sudden manifestation of the reign of God. His preaching is, indeed, dominated by His eschatology. But He has in mind two ends. One is that which is reached when men attain their final salvation in the supernatural kingdom of God. He came to preach, He came to heal those who were sick; He came that men might have life with His Father. And this life such as it will be in the future, He called the kingdom of God. This expression was not indeed, received in rabbinic Judaism; but the *idea* was that

1. See *Revue biblique*, 1906, pp. 382-411 and our *Commentaire de saint Marc*, pp. 312 ff.

2. Mt. XXIII, 37 ff.; Lk. XIII, 34 f.

of the Palestinian Jews. If the term kingdom to designate the other world is a creation of Jesus, we have another proof that He did not restrict Himself to words used by everybody else. It cannot be denied that He spoke, and more than once, of the kingdom of God as opposed to Gehenna. He determined the condition for entrance to this kingdom, and told what sacrifices must be made to enter therein. [1] This is one incontestable sense of the word of *basileia,* reign or kingdom, which is not borrowed from the apocalypses. But He also spoke of the reign of God which was to come here on earth. He depicted it in the parable of the sower as a gift of God which required the collaboration of man, the free acceptation of the will. [2] Far from looking upon it as a catastrophic happening, He compared it to a grain of mustard-seed which becomes a great tree, and to yeast which leavens the whole mass. [3] Perfect justice was not yet to prevail, since there was to be cockle therein. [4] This reign of God was not for Israel the realization of its desire of revenge, since the vineyard, that is Israel, the heritage of God, was to be given to others. [5] The parables simply cannot be made to say that the reign of God will exist only at the end of the world. Its establishment will, indeed, be the result of a miracle, but of the kind God works when He causes His sun to shine upon the just and the

1. Mk. IX, 46, X, 23 ff.
2. Mk. IV, 26.
3. Mt. XIII, 31-33; Lk. XIII, 18-21.
4. Mt. XIII, 24-30.
5. Mk. XII, 1-11.

unjust. In the kingdom of the beyond, there will be no mixture, no longer anything earthly, the elect shall be like the angels of heaven. [1] But this is to be understood of a Divine life after death and after resurrection. This kingdom *into which one enters* is not the same thing as the reign *which is coming.* The identification is excluded more clearly still when the reign of God is said to have come already : " If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the reign of God come among you. " [2]

For this reign which has already begun in its initial stage, Jesus preaches a righteousness superior to that of the Law of Moses. It is a hard necessity for the Eschatologists to have to say that the moral teaching of Jesus is provisory. This Divine teaching, so pure that it has renewed the inner life, so durable that many cling to it even after they have renounced our dogma, would be *interim* teaching! The morals of the beatitudes would have been in the mind of Jesus only a means to hasten the advent of the reign of God! We could, indeed, admit this last contention since He has taught us to say : " May thy reign come. " The reign of God comes as man becomes better. The masters of Judaism taught this, though they did not make enough of the grace of God. What could be more remote from the quietistic pessimism of the *Assumption of Moses,* from the anxiety to end all of the books of *Henoch* or of *the Sibyls,* than this loyal

1. Mk. XII, 25.
2. Mt. XII, 28.

striving after a perfection of which God alone is the exemplar? Is it conceivable that He who said : " I am not come to abolish, " that is, to do away with the moral law of Moses, " but to fulfil, " [1] that is, to perfect, He who opposed to what was said to the ancients what He taught Himself, He who created a new order of more perfect justice, expected the end of the world at the time of the next harvest?

Not that the words reign of God are simply a designation of the Church of earth. It is a broader concept. Henceforth God will reign as He has not reigned before, because His reign will have a Head in the person of the Messias, because He will be better known and loved. We do not identify, either, the reign of God announced by Jesus with that of the rabbis, in which God's part is so restricted. No, the Savior has not attenuated the action of God; theatrical intervention, upheavals, catastrophes ending in the victory of Israel, the existence of the just in the midst of plenty, — such dreams do not contemplate anything more Divine than the Passion which reconciles the world with God, and the Resurrection which inaugurates the kingdom by the triumph of its Head. Just as Jesus based upon the Decalogue a more perfect holiness, He used at times traditional and current imagery to designate the judgment of the Lord. This is no reason to regard Him as an echo of the opinion of visionaries or of revolutionaries, who formed a relatively small group in Israel. No, he did not set in

1. Mt. v, 17 ff.

movement a machine that was entirely ready for use. He subjected Himself neither to the doctrine of the rabbis, nor to the fantastic concepts of the pessimists. He read in the Scriptures that the reign of God would be manifested with brilliancy; He announced that the time was come, laid the foundation for this reign by His teaching, accepted the Passion which was to establish it, confident of the Resurrection which should be its glory. But He did not say when earth would cease to furnish recruits for the kingdom of heaven. Nothing was to be changed in the normal course of nature, and nevertheless He could say without exaggeration: "Some of them that stand here shall not taste death till they see the reign of God come in power." [1] And what would an earthly upheaval be compared to what is, in the eyes of faith, the entrance of Christ into His glory, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the foundation of the Church? Do even unbelievers know of a more notable date in the history of mankind?

The words of the Savior concerning the coming of the reign of God are not all to be explained as technical expressions of a well determined and universally received concept of the advent of God's reign. Some of them are figurative terms expressive of Divine facts; many of the most startling and imposing in their effect are less grandiose than those of the prophets. There is, indeed, a tragical event foreshadowed in some of His sayings - - an event which will bring to a conclusion centuries of history

1. Mk. IX, 1.

and change everything even within the lifetime of the contemporary generation. This is the judgment passed upon Israel. The expression used by Jesus may seem too strong to apply to such an unimportant event. What was the ruin of Israel compared to the cataclysm of the present world-war? If you wish to understand His threats, betake yourselves in thought to the country of Israel. For centuries Israel has been the people of God. Often chastised, she has repented, and God has pardoned her. This has lasted long, but it is finished. Now ruin is inevitable, the judgment draws near which the ancient seers of Israel had contemplated, their mind numbed with terror; for these seers borrowed from the triumph of murderous enemies, from earthquakes shaking the earth to its foundations, from the darkening of the sun and the fall of the stars, images to express the sentiments inspired by the coming exercise of the wrath and the judgment of God upon His people. The most ardent patriotism and the deepest religious feeling were moved in these great souls. More than all of them did Jesus experience this sorrow. He has sometimes expressed it with their images; for we do not think that tradition attributed to Him without reason these quotations from the prophets. And the judgment came, at the time which He had predicted. Israel still exists, but stricken; all her thought is focused upon that unique blow the memory of which she would efface. It was, indeed, a terrible judgment, the end of a world.

The Savior foresaw a catastrophe. Only Israel was to be its victim, — a view shared by none of the visionaries or agitators of His age. This is one

undeniable difference between His concept of the reign of God and that of others. He announced the fall of Jerusalem, and threatened the towns of Galilee, Capharnaum, Bethsaida and Corozain with a chastisement more severe than that of Sodom, [1] because they had failed to repent and had shown themselves deaf to His appeal. And after the ruin of Israel there is to be a future for the reign of God here on earth. Eschatologists tell us that Jesus understood that He must die when He failed to move Israel to repentance. But they fail to explain why He should die. Was it to take the place of His impenitent people? If so, would the chastisement be withdrawn? No, it is irrevocable. The vineyard will be given to others, to punish the wicked husbandmen for this last homicide, the murder of the Son. We are here at the essential point. The death of Jesus could not be useless. It was to extend the reign to others than the Jews, to those who would not refuse to take their place therein. [2] It must be proposed to them, and this was not the mission of Jesus. If the reign of the Eschatologists, bringing in the end of the world, were to begin with the death of the expiatory victim, this death would be of use to no one; for it could not be admitted, without going absolutely against the thought of Jesus, that any one could be subject to the reign of God without an act of faith and penitence. [3] If it were even simultaneous with the catastrophe, when could the Gentiles be

1. Mt. xi, 20-24.
2. Mt. viii, 11 f.; Lk. xiii, 28 f.
3. Mt. v, 20.

invited to replace the Jews at the banquet of the king? [1] There must be a future, after the death of the Savior; not much is said of the time left for the ingathering of the nations, but what is said gives an indefinite vista. Jesus does not wish to say when the end will come; one must ever watch. But He takes measures that His blood shall not be shed in vain; He prepares His Apostles to preach, and charges them to commemorate His sacrifice. [2] All is sufficiently clear; no quibble can prevail against this necessity to have upon earth a new reign of God in which may be formed the elect of the kingdom of God, associated with the saints of Israel.

Jesus, then, spoke of the reign of God without explanations to the multitude. There was, indeed, an idea of this reign everywhere received, which was derived from the Scriptures, which was the most substantial element of all hopes, the theme of all the variations : the sovereign power of God, His right to receive the homages of men. But He had His way of understanding the reign of God; He did not regard it as a simple progress of the Law, as did the rabbinic writings, not as the establishment of absolute justice as did the books of Henoch, nor as the victory of Israel as did the Zealots and all the others. He gave some notion of the reign to the multitudes, and to His disciples He revealed its secret — His death offered for the salvation of souls. He did more and better than to speak

1. Mt. xxii, 1 ff.
2. I Cor. xi, 24-26.

about it. He prepared it, He founded it. It still lasts.

III

The Eschatologists' Messias.

Not less important than the notion of the reign of God is that of the Messias. Before seeking for this notion in obscure apocryphal books, should we not interrogate history written in the open? The best advantage to be derived from the knowledge of books is the knowledge of the realities with which they deal. Here again, Germany has shown herself little concerned to set her ideas in a real environment. She has deduced a theoretical messianism, without getting at messianism in action. People have not known how to read the books of Josephus. Josephus believed in a lay messianism of which he was inclined to make Vespasian the hero; he was the enemy of the fanatics responsible for the ruin of his country; he cannot, then, be suspected of having overdrawn the picture of Israelite messianism in revolt against Rome. Now, notwithstanding his reticence, he has not been able to conceal the fact that there was agitation created by false Messiases, who drew the multitudes after them by promising a miraculous deliverance. The yoke of the Romans would be shaken off by God, who willed to be the real master of Israel. This is the imminent reign of God preached by more than one adventurer who posed as Messias. These move-

ments began at the time of Jesus' birth, when the Pharisees, in great number, refused to countenance a census after the Roman manner; they took on a revolutionary form with Judas the Galilean, whom Josephus makes the founder of a sect of philosophy which " would admit only God as head and master. " [1] Judas, son of Ezechias, perhaps the same as Judas the Galilean, claimed to be the Messias; then came Simon, then Athronges, who both assumed the diadem. The party of the Zealots became that of the *sicarii* in the time of the great rebellion; but, before that, Pilate had harshly repressed the attempt of an impostor who promised to show the people the sacred vessels deposited by Moses at Mount Garizim.

The individual attempts to claim the Messiahship have not been related in detail; we cannot exactly define what messianic concepts were involved. Nor can we discover in the apocalypses of the time the exact ideal the success of which was awaited, either through violent means or from God alone, with more or less of reliance on arms or of confident quietism. But there is an evident connection between the apocryphal books and the facts. Schweitzer has flattered himself that he has succeeded in setting forth a consistent eschatology. But he has not. The consistent eschatology is that which ranks Jesus with Zealot agitators who promised the near establishment of the reign of God; the same preaching would have led Him to the same execution. It is not given to all critics to go

1. *Le Messianisme*, p. 18.

so far as this [1]. Critics have thought to do better in establishing a sort of harmony between the reign of God and its Messias. They require a future Messias to inaugurate a future reign; they believe they have found him. In the Eschatological system, the notion of the Messias has transformed itself into a new and very precise notion, that of the Son of Man, awaited, together with the reign, to bring salvation and reestablish justice. And, indeed, in the very rare texts which give a head to the " terminal " reign, this head like the reign itself, comes from God; he had not, and could not have, an earthly existence. The Book of the Parables of Henoch, following the prophecy of Daniel, represent the Son of Man as a celestial being sent by God to render justice.

This is how he appears : " There I saw one who had a ' head of days, ' and his head was like white wool " — it is the image of the Eternal Father, — " and with him another whose figure was like that of a man, and his figure was full of grace, like one of the holy angels. I questioned the angel who walked with me, and who was making known to me all the secrets concerning this Son of Man : ' Who is he, and whence does he come? Why does he walk with the Head of days? ' "

1. We read in *La Religion* of M. Loisy, p. 134 : " The historian Josephus presents as head of a sect the principal agent of this revolt, Judas the Galilean; the sect is that of the Zealots, of the violent messianists... One of these messianic personages, — people do not generally hesitate to qualify the others as adventurers or the victims of delusion, — was Jesus the Nazarene... "

As to his work : " The Son of Man whom thou hast seen will cause the kings and the powerful to rise from their couches, and the strong from their seats; and he will break the back of the strong... " [1]

He is a prince of the court of God, if not one associated with Him on the throne. True, this Son of Man is likened to Henoch. If we do not see here an after-touch, we must remember that the existence of Henoch was lost in the night of the ages. He was not to come back to earth except in glory.

I do not wish to ask if this strange figure is not a Jewish counterfeit of Jesus Christ glorified, nor to insist on the uncertainty of the date of the Parables attributed to Henoch. Let us suppose that they are anterior to Jesus Christ, that at Jerusalem people had heard of the Son of Man otherwise than through Daniel. No one could think that a mortal man was the Son of Man. Johannes Weiss has said: " Jesus could be a Doctor, a Prophet, an Envoy of God, God's Chosen One, Son of David, and even Son of God, but He is not yet this Son of Man, He can only become the Son of Man. " [2] By these words has not Weiss condemned himself? For if Jesus did not take, during His mortal life, the title of Son of Man, there is nothing certain in the Gospel. If then Weiss is right about the notion then current of the Son of Man, it must be agreed that Jesus transformed it in order to reconcile it with His existence in human nature.

1. Henoch XLVI, 1 and 2. (Martin's Translation).
2. *Die Predigt Jesu,* 2nd ed., p. 175.

We here put our finger upon a difficulty which is insoluble in the Eschatological system. The Son of Man, such as the parables of Henoch present him, is the main piece of the Eschatological machinery; he must come only in glory, at the same time as does the reign. Jesus was not, then, the Son of Man in this sense. And nevertheless He was already the Son of Man before performing the glorious functions of this personage. In His testimony before the Sanhedrin He retained of the Son of Man the future heavenly glory, corresponding with the supernatural glory which Daniel suggested; and it is already as Son of Man that He forgave sins [1] and that He was master of the Sabbath. [2] But He also called Himself the Son of Man in speaking of His sufferings and death. [3] He who veiled His title of Messias, openly designated Himself Son of Man. Had it been a current messianic title still more glorious than that of Son of David, he would not have done so. If He had, the multitudes would have had to pronounce upon his messianic claim; the High Priest would not have had to seek witnesses and other grievances. Criticism would escape many difficulties if it kept to the text of St. John : " We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou : The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? " [4] The people of Jerusalem, then, did not

1. Mk. II, 10.
2. Mk. II, 28.
3. Mk. VIII, 31.
4. Jn. XII, 34.

know who was the Son of Man. Johannes Weiss has manifestly given way to the rather natural propensity to exaggerate the value of new or little studied documents.

The one who was expected was the Messias, son of David. [1] This is incontestably the tradition of the Masters of Israel, connected with the Old Testament by all the Rabbinic writings, by the apocalypses of Baruch and Esdras, by the daily prayer of Judaism in the time of Jesus, by the Psalms of Solomon which are earlier than He. And this tradition agrees with the acclamations addressed to the Savior at the time of His entrance into Jerusalem : " Hosannah ! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Blessed be the reign that cometh, of our Father David ! Hosannah ! " [2] We have at the same time in this passage the reign and the monarch, a temporal reign to be inaugurated and the Son of David. This text alone would be enough to prove that public opinion did not look for a sudden coming of a reign of absolute justice with the Son of Man from heaven. We are here on the ground of history and of national traditions. In the name of criticism these traditions are relegated to the background. They are supposed to have given way to the chimerical elucubrations of a few visionaries — visionaries, however, who are represented as perfectly cool-blooded, and literary men full of artifices rather

1. Jn. VII, 27 : " When the Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is, " presupposes an unknown birth-place, but not a heavenly manifestation without human existence.

2. Mk. XI, 9 f.

than really contemplative! Much courage is required by Schweitzer when he affirms that the people acclaimed Jesus as Son of David without acclaiming Him as Messias. But this logic is necessary to the system, which needs a future Messias, a Son of Man to come with the reign, while the Messias, son of David, living on earth is a Messias who has already come. Pilate, in his weakness, condemned a Messias whom he judged inoffensive; but the priests had handed Him over as one who pretended to be king of the Jews, and not as the Son of Man who had been announced. The multitude, it is true, long hesitated. At the moment of the confession of Peter, no decision had been reached; the mission and the existence of Jesus were really too modest. And, strange though it may appear to us, the texts of that time did not promise that the Messias would work miracles. It was too little for him, for his part was more glorious than that of an Elias or an Eliseus. Some took Jesus for Elias. He Himself did nothing to obtain recognition. He had, rather, resolved not to manifest Himself to the people. His principal office was to die; why should He have over-excited hopes in which the pure glory of God held such little place? How, then, did the mysterious news get to the masses? We do not know. Perhaps some of the apostles spoke. Perhaps at Jericho and Jerusalem the Davidic origin was known. Could a son of David, the author of so many miracles, be other than the Messias? The rest of his actions might come afterwards. The belief grew and became general. Je-

sus lent Himself to the people's acclamations, apparently to fulfil the Scriptures, and that Israel might recognize her king, were it only for a few days.

As for the disciples, living in the intimacy of the Master, the astonishing thing would be that they should not acknowledge Him as Messias. His humility was deep; He had His eyes ever fixed upon His Father, and sought only His glory; but He ruled over the elements, over sickness, over death, over demons, and if He recommended to His disciples fasting and prayer before undertaking to exorcise, He himself did not look to prayer for His own power. The things of God were not revealed to Him; He lived in them; the gift of miracles was not granted to Him, He granted it to others; He dared to forgive sins. St. Matthew tells us that Peter proclaimed Him not only Christ, but Son of God. St. Matthew, too, is alone in recording Jesus' congratulations to Peter upon that revelation of heaven. This felicitation must refer to the name of Son of God, rather than to that of Messias, and, if we are not mistaken, it is at the Transfiguration that Peter learned the mystery through the words of the Father. [1] But even at Cæsarea Peter does not say : " Thou art called to be the Messias, " but " Thou art the Messias. " And when the High Priest asks Him : " Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed? " Jesus says : " I am. " If He adds : " And you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the

1. On this order of events see *Commentaire de saint Marc*, p. 218.

right hand of the Power, and coming upon the clouds of heaven, " [1] He refers at the same time to Psalm CX and to Daniel. Now He had already drawn the attention of the Scribes to this Psalm CX: " How do the Scribes say that Christ is the son of David? David himself has said by the Holy Ghost : *The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord,* and whence is he his son. " [2] The scribes had not been able to answer. And none of them would have been able to say, either, how the son of David could be the Son of Man coming upon the clouds. When solemnly questioned by the High Priest, Jesus declares that He is the Messias, that is, according to the necessary meaning of the word, the son of David, but at the same time that He is that one whom David saw at the right hand of his Lord and called Lord, and that He is the Son of Man of Daniel. He says this, knowing that the declaration will cost Him His life, — that life which was to be immolated to furnish a ransom.

Here only do we learn from the lips of Jesus Himself the whole secret of His messianic consciousness. The Eschatologists do Him the favor of taking literally His affirmations of a supernatural vocation. They do not go far enough. And let the Liberals recognize that their wise Jesus, their ever-esteemed teacher of ethics, whose true history has been told by St. Mark, did not only attribute to

1. Mk. XIV, 62.
2. Mk. XII, 35 f.

Himself the glory of Son of Man, but acted as Son of God in the proper sense of the word. This is a fact according to St. John, according to St. Luke, according to St. Matthew, and also according to St. Mark. Wrede was right in saying that this tradition must be taken or left, but that it cannot be made to yield the modern psychology of a Liberal Jesus.

We take it such as it is, and we learn from Jesus what the messianic hopes did mean. They did not correspond to the dreams of the Apocrypha, nor to the rabbinic theology which had emptied them of their Divine contents, but they did correspond with the predictions of the Prophets of Israel. These great delineations of Scripture, which no one had been able to reconcile with one another, which appeared to be parallel, meet in Jesus, as in the infinite.[1]

The Old Testament had in divers ways pointed to Him who was to be the agent of the future salvation. First, the Savior was God Himself. Very many passages had announced that God would come in person to save His people. The salvation of Israel would be an extraordinary manifestation of the power and goodness of the Lord, who would work wonderful works; and the peoples were to be associated with Israel to render Him glory. On the other hand, Israel awaited a king, son of David, who would reestablish David's throne and rule over an empire vaster than David's. Isaias called Him Emmanuel, God with us, and even Hero-God. The

1. *Le Messianisme*, p. 258 f.

second part of the Book of Isaias pictured the sufferings of a servant of God who would be the salvation of Jacob and the light of the nations, a mild preacher, like unto the sheep which is immolated, and one whose death would be a source of salvation. Finally, Daniel had foretold that God would intervene, to establish His reign and that of the saints, giving a glimpse in heaven of a supernatural being like unto a man.

How could all this come into accord? Who then would be the Savior? No one could have said. We know through Jesus.

NINTH LECTURE

JUDEO-PAGAN SYNCRETISM.

I

The theory that Christianity is an amalgamation of Judaism and Paganism.

The method of the Eschatologists comes near to the scientific method employed in historical research and at the same time to the exegetical method of the Church. I speak of method and exegesis, not of conclusions. Good method requires that one should be on his guard against the danger of making a figure of history conform to the ideal of later times; that one should be ready to recognize religious principles at the origin of a religious movement. The scholar gives heed to his texts, and in order to understand them he seeks to inform himself concerning the ideas of the times in which they appeared. Up to this point we go along with the Eschatologists. But we do not believe in determinism in history. Country, period and race are not everything, whatever Taine may think. If the texts prove that a man of genius impressed upon his time a new direction or gave it a new impulse, the historian should admit the fact. Neither Johannes Weiss nor Albert Schweitzer have

been willing to do this completely. Schweitzer boasts that the Eschatological system is onesided in the support it gives to the first of the two alternatives, eschatological or non-eschatological; and onesidedness is our chief grievance against it, as it has been against all the other systems with which we have dealt. Onesidedness has given rise in this case to difficulties not experienced by the Liberal conception.

In bowing before Jesus as the unique teacher of an ethical system which is useful to every man and which reaches far beyond the narrow horizon of Judaism; in rendering with Jesus to the Father the homage which men must render who at all realize the price of their soul, Liberal critics have shown, by their own example, how a religion of Jewish origin was able to succeed when brought to the attention of the world. But the Eschatologists have given up these elements which explain the success of the religion of Christ. Jesus, they say, shared in the error of His people anent a miraculous reign of God which was to come, and which did not come. He was crucified by Pilate for having made Himself the Messias of revolutionaries or of visionaries. But what charm could this doctrine and this personality have for pagans, who despised the Jew though they were frequently drawn to his religion? Was it not compromising the worship of one God to connect it with Jewish messianism? And nevertheless the conversion of the Greco-Roman world is a fact. What was its cause?

It was, we have been told in France, by the representatives of a new School, that " the national

hope of Jewish messianism was transformed into a mystery of universal salvation. " Or again, " All well weighed, the new religion owed to pagan mysticism almost as much as to Judaism, and the pagan world found itself at ease therein because its spirit had first entered into it. " [1] The first of these propositions might be understood in a true sense; the second is a gratuitous insult to Christianity. But it is in Germany that we must look for the origin and the supports of the new system.

The hypothesis of a syncretism, of a fusion of pagan and Christian elements, offered itself as a way of getting out of the blind alley into which the Eschatologists had thrown themselves. It presented itself at the same time as an extension of their methods. They had rightly brought into the debate, alongside of the writings comprised in the restricted Canon of Protestantism, the books recognized as inspired by the Church, and still other books which came from those spheres where Judaism was in close touch with a foreign spirit. But the field of study was to be extended even farther; points of comparison must be sought in all religions, to learn in what Christianity differs from them, in what it resembles them, what it has perhaps borrowed from them, and, in fine, to determine scientifically, its origin and nature. This is what German searchers are now doing with as much zest and hopefulness as if nobody had ever before opened the New Testament. This time they are certainly advancing towards the light!

1. Loisy, *La Religion*, pp. 136, 138.

Mr. Windisch wrote last year, rightly, though too emphatically : " For more than ten years the deep study (*Erforschung*, one might think of the exploration of some dark continent) of the New Testament finds itself once more under the sign of history of religions. " [1] More than any other, perhaps, this school wishes to be qualified by a name, that of *religiongeschichtlich*, which expresses the idea that its specialty is to use the history of religions in the exegesis of the New Testament. Dupuis used to compare Christian dogma to " the ancient and primitive doctrine of the Magi " or to " the mystical science of the disciples of Zoroaster, " but nowadays we hear of the religion of savages, of the worship of trees and of animals, in a word, of fetichism, which the new historians are able to find in the New Testament.

You do not expect me to set forth in detail the beliefs and institutions which have been found more or less analogous to those of our religion. One question dominates all others. Did Christianity succeed among the pagans because it had borrowed from them, at least in part, the spirit of paganism, and become a mystery like the Pagan mysteries, or, more simply, a mystery-religion like the other mystery-religions?

At the beginning of these researches everything lent itself to comparison, every resemblance meant borrowing, and no hesitation was felt about rendering the resemblance more striking by applying Christian names to the most disparate religious

1. *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1917, p. 228.

acts : " Isiac vespers, " " Mithraic communion, " etc.

One might form with these extravagant opinions a florilegium or a joke-book. But it would not be very useful. It is better to keep to the principal points of mysticism and to study the system in its most illustrious representatives, who affect a certain moderation. Here is, for instance, the program of Professor Wilhelm Bousset, who is a leading figure : " No critic will maintain that Paul read the Hermetic writings, or, more generally, that Christianity depends on such or such a particular mystery-religion... It is a question rather of the knowledge of great spiritual ensembles, of realizing that the spiritual atmosphere was in some way determined by those manifestations in the midst of which Christianity grew up, and which in great part render its development intelligible. " [1] At first sight this appears less serious than formal comparisons on particular points. But Bousset does not understand it so. He believes he is getting to the root of matters : " On the other hand it is not question of analogies or parallel cases which are relatively not very conclusive, or only interesting, but rather is it question of ascertaining that a piety which had developed upon its own soil, has become amalgamated with the Gospel of Jesus, in such a way as to constitute with it a new formation, which would remain unintelligible to us, if we did not know that piety. " [2]

1. *Kyrios Christos,* p. XIII.
2. *Ibid.*

These terms are very indefinite; but we see elsewhere that the common points, or rather those at which Christianity is supposed to be vitally connected with the pagan piety, are, in the doctrine of St. Paul, the theory of the Spirit, and that of the sacraments, especially of Baptism and the Eucharist.

Once more we pass from the Gospel to St. Paul. We must see whether his writings support the contention that he added to the Gospel of Jesus important elements, the very spirit of pagan piety. It is thus, Bousset holds, that he succeeded with the Gentiles, and founded Christianity, the meaning of which would be : adaptation of the Gospel to the piety of the oriental world when this world had become Greco-Roman.

This proposition is, indeed, very offensive. Permit me, however, to call your attention to the fact that the upholders of this, the latest system made in Germany, give up St. Paul to the Catholics. St. Paul, the rampart of Protestantism, the sure refuge from the idolatries of Rome, the Apostle of justification by faith, the Paul of Luther in a word, is here declared to have introduced into the Gospel supernatural grace, the sacramental action of Baptism *ex opere operato,* the real presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and that not *with* the bread but in such a way that the faithful Christian feeds upon the body and blood of a God ! This does not mean that St. Paul's teaching is believed. He is rather blamed for having changed the nature of the Gospel. But, at any rate, he is explained literally, as the Church

has always explained him, as the Council of Trent understood him.

You see now why I thought best to begin the review of German exegesis with Luther and not with Reimarus; its last developments bring us right back to the days when Luther began to explain the Epistle to the Romans independently of Catholic tradition.

As for this last system, which finds the spirit of paganism in St. Paul, it will be easy to show that it reads into his Epistles all the paganism it finds therein.

II

The doctrine of the Spirit.

And first, what does Professor Bousset think of St. Paul's doctrine of the Spirit? This, he says, is the element which is capital in Christianity, which has made of a simply moral religion a supernatural religion. Jesus had preached penance for the remission of sins. There is nothing mysterious in this doctrine. After His death, the first Christians found themselves in contact with the Holy Ghost. They spoke in tongues, they healed, they felt themselves under the influence of the spirit of prophecy; the meetings passed in a sort of religious exaltation. There was nothing extraordinary in such experiences, Bousset remarks; in the beginnings of a religion all minds are overwrought.

Greek and Oriental paganism knew of such phenomena, and so had even the Hebrews, with their schools of prophets, prophesying to the sound of the flute or the tambourine. [1] No need, then, for the critic to explain by borrowing what is perfectly spontaneous in favorable conditions. But what is new is Paul's doctrine of the permanence of the Spirit in the baptized person. He speaks of it constantly. According to Holsten, [2] whose calculation Bousset accepts, Paul uses the word *pneuma* to designate the human spirit twelve times; he uses it to designate the supernatural Spirit of God given to the Christian in ninety-one cases. If the words of Bousset are here to be taken in their proper sense, he does not speak of a mere dwelling of the Spirit of God in the soul; the spirit is Divine in its origin, but it is nevertheless given, added to human nature; in other words, St. Paul expresses the Catholic doctrine of grace, which is a participation of the Divine nature. The critic tells us : " What is highest and best in man, that without which he is not truly a man, or at least is not of any worth in the sight of God, is nevertheless something foreign to him, given him from above through favor, added from without. " [3] These words are not so precise as the language of our theologians; Paul has nowhere said that man is not truly man without the Spirit. But this other statement is still more exaggerated : " The *ego* of man is nothing, the powers which

1. I Sam. x, 5.
2. In Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 130, note 2.
3. *Kyrios Christos*, p. 133.

determine the *ego,* whether it be the Spirit or the flesh, is everything. " [1] Here again, we have an *einseitig,* i. e., a unilateral system! The text, which is used to justify it is taken from the Epistle to the Galatians; " They (the Spirit and the flesh) are opposed one to the other, that ye may not do that which ye would. " [2] Obscure texts, with very strong expressions, have always been favorites with innovators. One should really not leave out of account St. Paul's very numerous appeals to free will. We note the exaggeration in passing; but what we would here point out is that Bousset has assuredly not attenuated the action in our souls of the Spirit given in baptism, and which dwells in us. And as he is only one of many who share this view, Lutherans will have to defend themselves against new adversaries.

But, asks the historian of religions, did Paul simply create this doctrine? May he not have drawn it from some other source? The natural source to which we might look is the teaching of Jesus; but access to the thought of Jesus on this point is closed to those who reject the account of his discourses given in the Fourth Gospel. Bousset first cites Philo. But Philo was a Jew, and besides he has nothing characteristic to offer. A more promising source would seem to be opened up in the doctrine concerning the *nous,* which in Greek means spirit; its action resembles somewhat that of the *pneuma,* which also is spirit. The description given

1. *Kyrios Christos,* p. 133.
2. Gal. v, 17.

of it by Bousset is a conglomerate of traits scattered in what are called the Hermetic writings.

We possess a collection of religious and philosophic considerations which are supposed to contain the revelation of the *god* Hermes, the Egyptian Thoth. The collection is hard to date. Some critics maintain that parts of it are anterior to the first century or belong to that century; but this is contested by Mr. Kroll, a very independent critic. [1] There are no traces of Christian influences, it is said; but Bousset recognizes here and there the influence of the Greek Old Testament. Finally, the work is the only known one of its kind. Why see *the* expression of Greek piety in this very confused, and somewhat pedantic, elucubration? Its very scope is not clear; it is not certain that its aim was to harmonize Egyptian traditions with Greek cosmogonic systems. If these writings had been much read, if their so-called *piety* had been widespread, other traces of it would be found. There are none. The *Oracula Chaldaica* and Gnosticism [2] which are brought up as reinforcements are admittedly influenced by Judaism and Christianity. Is Bousset, then, really justified in concluding that the "Pauline doctrine of the Pneuma with all its consequences forms part of a great whole?" and that "Paul followed in his misty anthropological

1. PAULY-WISSOWA, article *Hermes Trismegistos*. Kroll would not consent to go back earlier than the II century and regards the III century as the date of its principal elements.

2. We may add the *Oracula Hellenica* published by Mgr Batiffol, in the *Revue biblique*, 1916, pp. 177 ff.

pessimism, in his supernatural, dualistic formation of the doctrine of salvation, a tendency of the time which had already taken hold of many minds? " [1]

There is a much more simple solution, it is that of Paul himself, who affirms that he received from God the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is Spirit. At the very least he believed that the messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, and the principal one of these was relative to the effusion of the Holy Ghost. He expressly connected himself with the Old Testament in replacing the spirit of servitude by the Spirit of adoption. [2] Where can one find in the Hermetic writings this relation between the Spirit given and the quality of children of God, which in St. Paul is so close, and which makes of the gift of the Spirit a means of union with Christ?

Where do we find in these Hermetic writings the opposition between the spirit and the flesh, not the material flesh, but that flesh which is human nature considered as opposed to grace? This point, however, is what constitutes the supernatural — dualistic character of the doctrine of Paul. He had under his eyes, it is conceded, the manifestations of the Spirit in the primitive Church; and he could read this passage of Ezechiel : " And I will give you a new heart and put in you a new spirit, and I will take away the stony heart of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put in you my spirit. " [3] There is more harmony between the

1. *L. l.*, p. 141, f.
2. Rom. VIII, 15.
3. Ez. XXXVI, 26 f., according to the Greek translation.

texts of the Old and New Testaments, than between St. Paul and the writings of Hermes. But it is useless to compare the two doctrines very closely; Bousset has taken care to tell us that he does not claim that Paul read these writings. To come immediately to the main point, we may confidently assert that St. Paul and the Hermetic writer or writers do not breathe the same atmosphere, because the *nous* of Hermes is first of all a revelation, a light granted to privileged persons, whereas the *pneuma* of St. Paul is the love of God poured into our hearts. [1] The doctrine of the *pneuma* is an organic whole, a doctrine of life, whereas Hermetism painfully elucubrates subtle speculations which are incapable of founding religious belief, much less popular piety. Ah! exclaims Bousset, if we had anything but fragments of the Neo-Pythagorean literature, we would likely find it related to Hermetism, we would show the place of Hermetism in a great spiritual ensemble. Why then, we may ask, is this piety absent from the Life of Apollonius of Thyana? And if we did find anything related to Hermetism, we would still be in the regions frequented only by philosophers. It is because we can easily determine what the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite owes to philosophy that we appreciate so well how far St. Paul is from containing such an amalgamation. His doctrine of the Spirit is but the coincidence of the ancient prophecies and the historical part of the manifestation of Jesus and of the Spirit. And there is not the slightest

1. Rom. v, 5.

indication that he altered on this point the faith of the earlier apostles. These apostles, for their part, had received the Holy Ghost as the fulfilment of a promise of Jesus consigned in the Fourth Gospel, in the Acts of the Apostles, in St. Matthew, and in St. Luke. [1] These documents are at least as reliable as the Hermetic writings of which it cannot even be affirmed that they express the belief of a small group of believers. [2]

This is not a mystery religion, it is not a religion at all, nor a form of popular piety.

III

Pagan initiations and Christian Baptism.

The quest has been carried on elsewhere. We are on firmer ground, and in the religious domain, with the mysteries and initiations.

The effusion of the Holy Ghost was so clearly the characteristic of messianic times and the gift brought by the Messias, that John the Baptist, speaking of Him who was coming, had said : " I have baptized you with water, He will baptize you in the Holy Ghost. " [3] Whatever may have been

1. Jn. xiv, 24, Acts. i, 5, Mt. x, 19 f., Lk. xii, 11 f.

2. Kroll (Pauly-Wissowa, art. cited) refuses to believe in the existence of communities of adorers of the *nous* (reason) and of *Anthropos* (man), postulated so fancifully by Reitzenstein, and no liturgy can be found in the Hermetic writings; they are simply literary productions.

3. Mk. i, 8 cf., Mt. iii, 11 and Lk. iii, 16.

the precise meaning attached to these words by John the Baptist, it is evident that the Evangelists understood them of the gift of the Holy Ghost in Christian baptism. This is the doctrine of St. Paul, though he has not the same formula. He writes to the Romans : " We that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know ye not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, have been baptized in his death? We have been buried together with him by baptism (to unite ourselves) with his death... Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live with him... Reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. " [1] And elsewhere : " But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you... " [2] The Spirit of God who is given us that we may be adopted sons, and thus brothers of the natural Son of God, dwells in us the moment we are dead to sin and begin to live with Christ, that is to say, at the moment of baptism.

When the Catholic Church practices infant baptism, she thinks that baptism acts by itself, and confers grace. She can, together with her tradition, allege the texts just quoted in favor of her practice. This is what we learned in catechism; baptism is a sacrament which works of its own power, *ex opere operato*. Bad will on the part of an adult may indeed be an obstacle to grace; and desire with faith may obtain grace. But these are cases to be solved in accordance with principles,

1. Rom. VI, 2-11.
2. Rom. VIII, 9.

and they change nothing in the typical case : baptism considered in its essence is a sensible sign which confers grace by the action of God. Against this doctrine Protestantism has been protesting since the days of Luther. Luther retained baptism and the word sacrament, but, once he had laid down the principle of justification by faith alone, without the granting of an interior grace, baptism meant little for him. The baptized person was freed from sin juridically; he was justified by legal fiction, nothing more. Sarcasm used to be heaped upon the Church, charged with having abandoned the faith of the Apostle to adopt magical rites, in the spirit of pagan religions. Such taunts had became more offensive as the phenomena of magic became better known; for magic has come to mean superstitious practices condemned by religion, or the lowest form of religion among savages.

But now critics, having laid aside Protestant prejudice, have realized that Paul taught the efficacy of baptism. According to him it is a true sacrament, that is, it has a physical or hyperphysical action. We would say, a real and supernatural action.

This thesis was set forth by W. Heitmüller in 1903 before " The Scientific Association of Pastors, " [1] and in his brochure " Baptism and Supper in Paul. " [2] The whole history of religions school applauded. Still more striking than these adhe-

1. *Der wissenschaftliche Predigerverein.*

2. *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus,* 1903, 56 pp. and *In Namen Jesus,* 1903, 347 pp.

sions, the refutation undertaken by Clemen proves the confusion of the conservative Lutheran party. The authority of St. Paul must be saved at any cost. Clemen contends that not the Apostle, but the Catholic Church of the year 200, became contaminated by magical rites. The texts *may*, indeed, signify the sacramental character of baptism, [1] but a man like Paul would not have fallen into this error, incompatible with salvation by faith. — We are of course saved by faith, but by a faith which accepts baptism as the means of becoming united to Jesus Christ. And if one may explain the texts of St. Paul in accordance with the practice of the Church, *must* one not, as a good critic, so explain them? For St. Paul really belonged to the Church; he was a Church authority. It is hard, at any rate, to see how he could, if he would, express more strongly the reality and the efficacy of the Divine operation in baptism.

His words are so strong that the new exegetes exaggerate the bearing of his teaching. They attribute to baptism a change in human nature; here again they use the word magic.

Now, I find this surprising on their part. They know how to discern in the Canonical writings the least shades of doctrine; they refuse to ascribe to the same author views which are in the least unlike. An unconscious redactor is ever in demand to assume responsibility for bracketing together such unlike views. Traces of Paulinism in St. Mark do

1. *Der Einfluss der Mysterienreligion auf das älteste Christentum*, 1913, p. 39.

not escape them; and they expunge them from the primitive catechesis. And these perspicacious critics give the same names to the sacraments as to the operations of witches and fetichists! Have these lynxes been changed into bats? Many complaints have been made against Scholastic distinctions; but the distinction of concepts is at the basis of every comparison and consequently of every form of reasoning. Here the confusion comes from the word " physical. " Magic, according to its adepts, acts as does nature. Like produces like. Rain is obtained after a long dry spell by pouring out water, or by drawing tears by means of torture from an unfortunate human victim: a heart is softened by melting wax, etc. And it is because magic relies on such practices that it is condemned in the religions of civilized peoples, which employ sacrifice and prayer to win the favor of the gods.

In baptism water alone does nothing, or it washes. What is effective, is a Divine power which acts through the sacrament. And, nevertheless, its action is physical, in the sense that it belongs to the domain of reality. Sins are not merely thought to be wiped away, they are remitted; grace is not a juridical fiction, it is an entity — a Divine entity, but what is more real than the Divine? But nature is not changed. Paul knew it well; none speaks more forcibly of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit after baptism.

Christian baptism has, then, nothing in common with magic. It does not act like a natural force nor change nature. Our historians of religions will not admit this. With their precipitate logic

they declare that since the baptized person is united to the risen Christ, he can no longer sin, he should not even die. If Paul, as it is granted that he did, recoiled from these extreme conclusions, it is because he was restrained by his practical sense. He escaped an absurdity only thanks to an inconsistency. — Let it then be proved to us that an action of God cannot be real without transforming nature, that it cannot do away with sin without granting the gift of never sinning again, that it cannot place in the soul the germ of resurrection without freeing the believer from death! In the meanwhile, we like to hear the historians talk about the realism of St. Paul, though we cannot agree with Bousset that St. Paul's realism is *radical*. [1]

The texts being understood as if they were the record of the beliefs of savages, Christian baptism is compared to the different baptisms employed in paganism. I do not know that a pagan origin has been found for the fact itself of immersion. It was practiced amongst the Jews; the rite of John the Baptist was no novelty for them. The baptism of Christians is a transformation of that of John.

What is new, it is claimed, is that Christian baptism should serve as an initiation into a religion or a mystery. That baptism initiates us into the Christian life, is a matter of faith. But is it as clear that pagan baptisms initiated into mysteries? It cannot be seen that they had that importance

1. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 163 : Es ist als wenn Paulus sich in diesem radikalen Realismus kaum genugthun könnte.

in the mysteries of Eleusis, nor in those of the Great Mother or of Isis. The text of Tertullian, strong as it is, has not this meaning : " Certainly in the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are bathed (or baptized), and they pretend to do it to acquire a regeneration and impunity for their perjuries. " [1]

Baptisms would, then, have had as their purpose the purification of the soul. Ritual purification is the natural symbolism of all the ancient lustrations. And, indeed, the symbolical connection between the washing of the body and the purification of the soul rests on a very clear metaphor; one may not speak of borrowing when things present themselves naturally to the mind. But purification is not initiation. It is at most a preliminary act.

There is not here any initiation because there is no union with a God. So our mythologists go deeper and deduce this union from the special meaning of the Christian rite, namely, union with Christ dying and rising, which recalls to them the pagan religion of a God suffering, dying and rising.

Either they mean nothing at all, or they mean that without these pagan beliefs Christianity would not be what it is.

What, then, were these gods which suffered, died and rose again? They have cited the Babylonian Tammuz, the Syrian Adonis, Osiris of Egypt, Attis of Phrygia, the Greek Dionysos who came

1. *De bapt.*, v.

from Thrace, the Dionysos Zagreus, Melkart of Tyre and Heracles Sandan of Tarsus. [1]

I cannot undertake to tell you in detail what we know of their adventures and of their worship. Bousset would readily dispense me from the task of making any comparison at all; for he doubtless has understood how unfitting it must be to bring the Savior into the presence of an Adonis or an Attis. He has likewise understood that such a collocation would have been no less shocking to the conscience and good sense of the first faithful. But we would be wrong to avail ourselves of this dispensation, dictated by tactical reasons, and so deprive ourselves of a good argument.

Bousset sets aside particular comparisons, but he imagines (the word is not too strong) an abstract idea of a god suffering, dying and rising, disengaged from myths and forms of worship, become almost a theorem, without ceasing to be an object of faith. Here is his text : " The concrete figure of the god with his definite myth is no longer in relief; in all there is manifested an idea which puts Hellenic mystery-piety in possession of a mystical power, the idea of the Divinity dying and risen who brings salvation. And this idea takes on little by little a philosophical garment, the myth becomes religious speculation. " [2] Here we have the traits of Christ; here we have an attempt to create a spiritual atmosphere in which the first Christians will not

1. Cf. *Les religions orientales et les origines du christianisme*, in *Mélanges d'histoire religieuse*, and *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, 2e éd.

2. *Kyrios Christos*, p. 166.

inhale too much asphyxiating gas. The proof Bousset gives that this fusion was realized is that the Greeks gave it the name *theocrasy*. — Yes, but when and how? We are again obliged to distinguish. There was a first theocrasy which was an identification rather than a fusion of gods. Bousset goes back to the time of the successors of Alexander for the identity of Dionysos and of Osiris. We might even go as far back as Herodotus. When the Greeks began to study the Orient and Egypt, they perceived that some of their gods had certain common attributes with those of this new world. They thought that they were the same. But the religions remained different, and so did the worships. Afterwards the idea arose of one divinity of which the different gods were but the manifestation. It is expressed at length by Apuleius in the middle of the II century after Christ in favor of Isis, divinity one and multiple. The two ways of combining the gods among themselves were followed separately and then they fused; Adonis, Attis and Osiris were assimilated on account of their incontestable resemblances in myth and worship. But these speculations in which the effect of rhetoric gave relief to the thought, which remained naturalistic and pantheistic, had little influence on the worships. Never was there any piety, Greek or Oriental, aroused by the concept of a god suffering, dying and rising. Attis or Adonis or Osiris was honored by appropriate worship or mysteries; Attis came to be regarded, in his circle, as the supreme god; people were conscious of a particular resemblance between certain worships, and the

priests of Attis flattered themselves that they possessed a religion which had analogies with that of the Christians. [1] But, once more, this would not have resulted in the disengaging of the idea of a divinity dying and rising for the salvation of men, except possibly in the brain of a philosopher. And even this exceptional case did not occur.

As a matter of fact, none of these more or less divine personages was properly, at least in the time of Christ, a dead and risen god. It is known from the Acts of the Apostles [2] how repugnant to the Greeks was the idea of the resurrection. We must here deplore a lack of precision which would not be tolerated in any other order of researches. The same scholar who speaks of the resurrection of Dionysos Zagreus began with a correct exposition of his myth. [3] Zagreus was killed by the Titans who cut him into pieces and devoured him, with the exception of his heart. This heart was swallowed by Zeus or by Semele, as a consequence of which a second Zagreus was born, who shared the

1. St. Augustine has transmitted to us the exclamation of a priest of Cybele speaking of Attis : " Our turbaned god, he too, is Christian *et ipse pileatus christianus est* (*Tract. in Joann.* VII, 1, 6). " M. Graillot (*Le culte de Cybèle,* p. 514) takes this as a reference to the use of ointments : " Attis, like the Christ, brought to his faithful the sacrament of holy chrism, which had become the symbol of the athlete who is preparing for battle : *habet ergo diabolus christos suos* (Firm. Matern., *De err. prof. rel.,* XXII, 3). " I should rather think, from the context of St. Augustine, that it was an allusion to the bloody expiation.

2. Acts XVII, 32.

3. Ch. Dubois, art. *Zagreus* in the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités.*

throne of Zeus. Is this a resurrection? Adonis was a handsome young man, beloved of Aphrodite, killed by a boar; all Greece and the Orient lamented his death. Of resurrection there is no question until the second century of our era, and then only in an interpolated text. [1] Adonis was, moreover, never a god properly so-called.

The myth of Attis is extremely complicated and I could not here explain it to you with propriety. Of resurrection there is no question until the IV century, and then in a Christian author.

Heracles is, indeed, a risen hero; Iolaos raised him by making him inhale the odor of quails. Heracles was a glutton. It is a mere episode in a fairy story. But Heracles died upon a pyre, and was received among the gods. [2] This is an apotheosis, a change of nature, not the resurrection of a man-god. The theme of a man who becomes a god is classical in paganism from the earliest times, in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. There is no need of much research to discover such cases. But what is new in Christianity, is the incarnation of the Son of God, raised after His mortal life. Besides, among the gods which are cited, Attis became a god only very late, Heracles and Adonis never became altogether divine.

Alone among those referred to as suffering, dying and rising gods, Osiris is really a type of a risen god. But his worship was very specially

1. Cf. *Études sur les religions sémitiques,* by the present writer, 2nd. ed. p. 303.

2. *Études sur les religions sémitiques,* pp. 308-311.

Egyptian. It was not precisely his resurrection that was celebrated. Resurrection was, according to the Egyptian religion, dependent on the preservation of the body. Now Osiris, killed by his brother Typhon, had been cut to pieces. His wife Isis had gathered the pieces, except one, which was indispensable, the emblem of life and resurrection. Finally she discovered it. Therefore, after the rite of mourning which lasted four days, the *Invention* was celebrated. You see to what this so-called feast of Easter is reduced. The resurrection of Osiris was thereby rendered possible and took place in the other world. What was commemorated was a loss and a recovery. Osiris has always been a god of the other world, dead, and a god of the dead, a sad, mummy-like figure. He survives as god of the living in the person of his son Horus, god of light and vanquisher of Typhon.

It is true that Osiris is the type of the resurrection of the dead, and it is, I believe, from Egypt that this idea spread in heathendom. But the Jews of the time of Jesus believed in the resurrection; the Apostles believed in the resurrection of Jesus; what could the Osiris-myth add to their belief?

The only trait that is truly common to all these gods or heroes, is that their so-called passion was a wholly personal affair. Never were the sufferings or the death of a god accepted in view of the salvation of men, nor even regarded as useful for this salvation. All that is found of the kind, and this is found only in the IV century after Christ, is a text of the Christian Firmicus Maternus, according to whom the initiate hope for salvation

like the god : " Courage, initiate, since the god is saved; you shall be delivered from your sorrows. " [1]

While pagan piety was finding expression in rites which were supposed to recall the adventures of the gods, the mythologists of the day endeavored to discover the meaning of these myths. For philosophers, since Socrates, regarded them as absurd and obscene, and sought to interpret them. An instance is given by Bousset, the one which he regards as most suggestive : " The suffering and dying god (Osiris) is the divinity which has its proper home in the world of ideas, Κόσμος νοητός. With a view of creating, of setting in motion the inert masses of matter, it came down into the inferior and sordid world of matter, lost itself in the lower world of sensibility, was torn to pieces, held captive in powerlessness; it did not, nevertheless, lose the capacity to rise anew to the divine world by coming forth from the abasement of death. " [2] This is found in Plutarch, in the second century after Christ, among many other explanations.

Such explanations are the work of mythologists... and of critics. We have a right to ask them to be more definite, to leave the world of abstractions and the comparisons of libraries in order to look upon the facts such as they must really have been. Let us suppose, if any one insists, — for it has never

1. Firmicus Maternus, *De errore prof. relig.* (éd. Ziegler), pp. 57, 14 s. : Θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου, ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν τῶν πόνων σωτηρία.

2. *Kyrios Christos,* p. 166.

been proved, — that the Oriental mysteries which took on great developments in the Empire in the second century, that the philosophical systems of which there are traces only at the same period, were known in the year 40 at Jerusalem, at Corinth, and at Rome.

Was Paul the first to reflect on the union of the Christian with the death of Christ in baptism? No, for he says to the Romans : " Know ye not that all we who have been baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? " [1] Mystical union with Christ dead for them was, then, known to them, simply because they were Christians. But whence did this deep conception, not easily suggested by the symbolism of baptism, come to the Christians, to Judeo-Christians as well as to the others (for Paul makes no distinction between them in this respect) unless it be from the Apostles, or the columns, [2] as St. Paul calls them.

Then what is meant? The Apostles believed Jesus was Messias because they saw Him, — the scholars with whom we are discussing would say because they thought they saw Him, — risen. It is not pagan worship which taught them the character of the death of Christ, a death accepted to assure their salvation, since this idea is nowhere found in the mysteries. On the other hand, this idea of an atoning death was in Isaias [3] and familiar enough to the Jews.

1. Rom. v, 2.
2. Gal. II, 9.
3. Is. LIII.

Is it contended that the Apostles or the first Christians believed more easily in the divinity of Jesus on account of the legends of gods dying and rising? Since a god may die, the Christ may well have been God, notwithstanding His death. More than one pagan may have so reasoned and have preferred Christ to Attis. But this supposes an already existing rivalry between the two worships. Could a Jew reason in this way, or even a Gentile converted beforehand to the belief in one true God? From the fact that Osiris had been cut to pieces, that these pieces were found by Isis, that afterwards Osiris regained his rank among the gods; from the fact that Adonis, killed by a boar, was again admitted to the intimacy of Aphrodite; from the fact that Attis, mutilated by his own will, was changed into bread and then recognized as a god, could one conclude that Jesus of Nazareth should receive the worship which belongs only to the one true God? As well suppose that the apotheosis of Claudius suggested the conferring of Divine honors upon Jesus. For any Jew this apotheosis was the abomination of desolation; for any sane mind, it was a comedy. As for the Platonic explanation of a god come down from the sphere of ideas, and imprisoned in the matter which he came to organize, an outrageously false explanation and one that is isolated, what impression could it make upon those simple souls who composed the first communities?

When a Christian, or even a simple tourist, assisting at the exercises of turning dervishes, sees the over-excitement of the dancers, who are beside

themselves and fall from exhaustion, he experiences a feeling of repulsion. If it be explained to him that these dances represent the movement of the heavenly spheres, will his painful impression be changed into admiration? I might have chosen an example which would be more expressive. An Italian poet who has recently died while still young, saw in India the *devadasi*, priestess of Ramba Devi, dancing :

" She was certainly the sister of the Greek Venus, surviving in the land of Brahma, while the other has disappeared forever at the coming of her enemy, the Virgin Mother.

" We, who are devoted to the Virgin Mother, who is an affirmation of the spirit, a negation of the flesh, cannot understand an erotic worship; all our inmost essence, moulded by morals which have governed us for two thousand years, shudders and revolts on seeing the sister of the old adversary arise from the night of ages. " [1]

Guido Gozzano had not yet returned to his Christian faith when he felt this disgust; the two-thousand year old morals shuddered within him. Are we to esteem less the first enthusiasm of the Christian communities, that intense desire for remission of sins which was, it is recognized, what gave power to the Gospel? Did those who sought in the death of Jesus Christ pardon, reconciliation with God, breathe the same spiritual atmosphere as the devotees of forms of worship which are almost unmentionable? The Apostles gave baptism in the

1. *Le Correspondant*, Feb. 10, 1918, p. 557.

name of Jesus; Christians, in baptism, united themselves to His death and resurrection to live in God, because they sought God in Him, and that from the very first day; for mystical union cannot take place between human beings, and the Christians really united themselves to Christ. If we might distinguish with some German scholars, Schweitzer, Bousset and others, a mysticism of God and a mysticism of Christ, that is to say, the secret of uniting oneself to God or of uniting oneself to Christ, one should have to grant unhesitatingly that the mysticism of St. Paul and that of baptism is mysticism of union with Christ. But can we for a moment suppose that the desire of union ended in Christ as in an intermediary distinct from God? Would this not have been to rob God of His glory? Does not Paul speak of living " unto God in Christ Jesus? "[1] " You are dead, he writes to the Colossians, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. "[2] To live in Christ or in God is the same Divine life. There is only one mysticism in St. Paul; it brings us to God through Christ dead and risen. It has nothing in common with myths, which never have given rise to true mysticism.

IV

The Eucharist.

The mysticism of baptism, however realistic it is, astonishes the modern world less than that of the

1. Rom. vi, 11.
2. Col. iii, 3.

Eucharist. It is again Luther who opened the way to complete negation by rejecting transubstantiation. His followers went farther; but they thought they could safeguard the rite and the authority of St. Paul whilst reducing the sacrament to the status of a mere symbol. Now William Robertson Smith, a very distinguished orientalist, described the primitive sacrifice of the Semites as the immolation and the eating of the god, who thus communicated to the members of his clan a renewal of the divine life which this clan had from him. People smiled at first, and it was remarked that this was already the Catholic Eucharist! Then they reread St. Paul, in the light of the history of religions, and they found in him the traditional teaching about the faithful feeding upon the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood. Dieterich, in his "Liturgy of Mithra" [1] has no doubt about it, nor has Heitmüller, [2] nor Weinel, [3] nor Reitzenstein, [4] nor in England, Lake. [5]

This would be all well enough, if our new exegetes did not affect to understand this eating of a God in the grossest manner. And the conclusion is at once drawn that an idea so foreign to Jewish faith can have penetrated into Christianity only through the pagan mysteries. And, in fact, in the mysteries of Dionysos Zagreus, the faithful cut up and ate the raw flesh of a bull, which, deified by the prepara-

1. *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, p. 106.
2. *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus*, p. 84.
3. *Biblische Theologie des N. B.*, p. 327.
4. *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, p. 57.
5. *Earlier Epistles of saint Paul*, p. 213.

tions of the sacrifice, represented the god himself. This worship was known in the V century B. C., as is established by texts of Euripides [1] and Aristophanes. [2] Plutarch speaks of it with disgust. [3] To strengthen the argument drawn from the eating of raw flesh, Egyptian texts have been recalled in which Pharao, when he enters heaven, devours the gods in order to absorb their strength and their wisdom. The human sacrifices of the Aztecs, in which a divine name was given to the victims before they were devoured, furnish another analogy. The sacrifice and the bloody repast of the Sinai Bedouins related by St. Nil, and so fully exploited for the benefit of his theory by Robertson Smith, are insisted on. [4] This case at least occurred not very far from Palestine, and the custom must have been ancient. But the victim of the nomads, whether a youth or a camel, did not represent the deity; it was immolated to the morning star, the presence of which in the sky was required for the sacrifice. How the most brutal practices of the most rudimentary religions can have thus amalgamated with the worship of the spirit borrowed from Hermetic philosophy, we are not told.

1. *Fragm.* 476.

2. *Ran.*, 355.

3. In his treatise on the cessation of oracles (ch. xiv), in the same category of rites more demoniacal than divine, he places Homophagia and cutting in pieces, fasts and lamentations, with obscene words. These are precisely the rites, judged ignoble by enlightened paganism, that would have formed the spiritual atmosphere in which Christianity grew up!

4. *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, 2nd. ed p. 257 f.

All these rites understand communion in the way in which it was understood by the Capharnaites, who were horrified at the thought; the spiritual element is lacking in them. The desire to absorb divine powers by eating is assuredly very widespread among savages. To the people of Capharnaum, Jesus answered that the flesh had never profited. What profited, was to nourish themselves with His body very really indeed, but by the way of the Spirit. Did the Apostles, when they heard the words, " This is my body, " " This is my blood, " believe in their efficacy because of the ancient usage, abandoned as barbarous, of eating the raw flesh of victims, for the sake of finding the living god in the still running blood? Let us answer, since we must, that the Eucharist was destined to commemorate the death of Christ, His blood shed in order to form a new covenant; it was renewed in memory of that death. The words of Christ which we have recalled and the determination of the meaning of the Eucharist must have preceded the rite. The transformation which some have conjectured, — representing the disciples as imagining that they were feeding upon Christ at the traditional banquet and then inventing the sayings attributed to Christ, — such a transformation, carried out in all the churches, without any protest being raised, is a thousand times more inexplicable than the act of the Master, such as tradition related it. Alone could His authority have imposed the rite and fixed its meaning.

It is embarrassing to discuss these matters, and this embarrassment is not less when we hear people

compare to the Supper of the Lord the elementary usages of the mystery-religions, usages which really existed in the first century, though under a less repulsive form than in the rite of eating raw meats. Sacred meals were known to the Jews as well as to the pagans; they ate the flesh of the victims; but it would be going too far to attribute to these banquets a divine effect produced in the soul. At most, in these repasts God or the god was considered as invited to share them; the worshippers rejoiced in his presence; the sacred meal was a manifestation of devotion which drew down the divine favor, not a sacrament. This being clearly the case, insistence is placed by critics less on the banquet itself than on certain foods of which the initiate partook.

According to Clement of Alexandria, a person who had been admitted to the mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis declares : " I have fasted, I have drunk the cup; I have received from the box; having done, I put it into the basket, and out of the basket into the chest. " [1] A very considerable German scholar, Lobeck, has changed " done " into " tasted. " This would give a solid substance and a liquid substance. This correction appears very suspicious to me, but let us pass on.

In the worship of Cybele and of Attis, the elect said : " I have eaten out of the drum, I have drunk out of the cymbal. " This food and this drink are said to resemble the Eucharist. Yes, because you look upon these aliments as a divine substance.

1. *Protrept,* 18.

But this is something no one has a right to say. The texts do not permit the inference, and the principles of the mysteries exclude it. Resemblances may be catalogued; they are undoubtedly numerous, though very remote; but they do not permit us to place the two initiations on the same level. The two communions are different.

We believe, indeed, that Christianity would not have won souls had it not presented itself as a mystery of salvation. Alongside of the ancient religions, which were especially the worships of cities and had as their object the public weal guaranteed by the favor of the gods, there had been formed societies, *thiasi,* in which men sought in common the secret of escaping the peril of total perdition at the moment of death. Judaism, too, proposed to itself the salvation of the circumcised in the world to come. A pious Jew expected it of the observation of the Law. In the pagan world, men sought to establish a particular relationship with helpful divinities by means of the mysteries. But this was not exclusively reserved to the mysteries. It was ever the predominant preoccupation of Egyptian religion to assure by its ceremonies the salvation of its faithful in the midst of the dangers of the world. And all religions had little by little come to make of individual salvation beyond the grave their principal object.

It goes, then, without saying, that Christianity must present itself with promises of salvation, and these promises must naturally be connected with a divine personage, with a God. By uniting himself to his god, the Greek initiate might escape

perdition. But what could this union be in the mysteries?

Strange as it may appear to us, union with the god in the Greek mysteries was brought about by a spectacle. And perhaps a human eye never contemplated better ordered processions than those which went from Athens to Eleusis, nor dances more graceful than those which took place in the meadows near the sanctuary of Demeter, nor sights comparable to the performances of the great mysteries, in which a beauty-loving people, which had created the tragedy, surpassed itself in its effort to produce in souls the deepest impressions of sorrow or of serenity. These sacred dramas must have aroused confidence in regard to salvation. Admitted to the knowledge of the destiny of the two goddesses, Demeter and Core, the initiate based upon this knowledge the hope of living in their company in the Elysian fields. All the other rites, baths, sacrifices, reception of sacred aliments, were only preliminary. Again, this is astonishing. M. Foucart, [1] who knows the Eleusian mysteries better than anybody else, has judged that this is not enough. He has supposed that certain passwords were confided to the initiate to permit them to triumph over the snares set for souls on the way to the Elysian fields. Old Egyptian texts, Orphic inscriptions of the V century B. C., may be alleged in this sense. It is still a conjecture. Others have

1. The persevering studies of M. Paul Foucart have been summed up in *Les mystères d'Eleusis,* an 8° vol. comprising 508 pages, Paris, 1914, cf. *Revue biblique,* 1914, pp. 619 ff.

considered that the mystic union was effected by the sacred marriage of the god and the goddess, at which the initiate would be represented by a priest. But a sufficiently formal text indicates that the culminating point of the mysteries was the manifestation and the contemplation of an ear of wheat. I more willingly cite the mysteries of Eleusis, as the noblest of all, although, according to the Fathers and also according to what we learn about them from archeological discoveries, they were indecent. But let us leave aside this aspect of the question. The decisive point is that these spectacles, whatever their splendor and their blemishes, did not recall acts profitable unto salvation. The divine acts were full of promise because the initiate, admitted into the confidence of the god, remained his friends forever; but none of these acts were performed by the god to bring himself near to men and unite himself with them. The faithful, then, could not receive any benefit from these acts; their fruit was not a real union.

The concept of a union at the same time real and spiritual is not found in antiquity. It is at the center of Christianity. Here the faithful unite themselves to God in the humanity of Jesus Christ, in the human way, because He has become man.

Communion is union with this Divine victim. The mysticism of Paul has its whole meaning only as an Incarnation mysticism.

The acts of Jesus are salutary because they are those of the Son of God, who came to give to Jews and Gentiles the grace of pardon. This is the mystery, unknown to the Jews, which won the

heart of the Gentiles. They found in Christ a God who was come to seek them, whose death had been efficacious in view of their salvation : " He loved me, and delivered Himself for me. " [1]

It was a mystery, in the sense that it was a revealed doctrine, and inaccessible to reason. But Christianity was not on that account a mystery-religion, that is to say, a religion of sacred rites known only to the initiate. This is another distinction which may dispell many ambiguities.

It is said that Paul knew the religions of his age. And, indeed, he was not ignorant concerning the superstitions which might have corrupted the purity of his Gospel. His Christians at Colossæ had just emerged from paganism. Certain elements of asceticism, the worship of certain heavenly spirits, seemed to them capable of assimilation with their new faith. The Apostle put them on their guard. [2]

It is claimed that Paul borrowed something of the worship of the dying and risen god... What would he have done with it? Imagination had created, in the best-known cases, those of Osiris, of Attis and of Adonis, perhaps through the interpretation of a ritual, a human story to figure the destiny of the springtime vegetation or of the grain of wheat. This is at least what is understood by the immense majority of ancient mythologists, and what is thought still by the most distinguished among the moderns. Paul did not disdain to use

1. Gal. II, 20.
2. Col. II, 16 f.

the comparison of the grain of wheat [1] for the resurrection, but he did not go beyond this.

From the rites and myths concerning a dying and rising god, transcendant philosophers tried to extract a purer essence; such, among many, is the mythologist cited by Plutarch. Is it this extracted essence, void of all moral teaching, that was combined with Christianity? No, no more than was the sensual rite which horrified the converts.

What then are we to hold in the matter? Let modern erudition take these religions which tell of gods suffering and rising such as they are in the V century, after having become perfected in contact with Christianity and in concurrence with it, let it choose the most noble traits to be found therein, the purest aspirations, the deepest meanings. Let it succeed (if it can) in uniting all that is best in them into one system; there will be found in this system no serious appeal to reform of morals. What would the amalgamated result be if in extracting these erudite references, the context were to be taken into account! The Dionysos of Aristophanes has spoken of the pious life of the initiate. [2] This is, indeed, a text! But it is found amid the lowest jestings that can dishonor a divine being, the object of worship in certain mysteries. Apuleius has expressed with the suavest compunction the love of a devotee for Isis; [3] this expression is found in the story of the metamorphoses of an ass. If instead of

1. Cor. xv, 35.
2. *Frogs*, 456.
3. *Metam.* XI, 24 and 25.

comparing texts people would place themselves in thought in one of those meetings in Jerusalem in which the memory of Christ still lived, and then in one of those hideous meetings in which the bloody fury of the imitators of Attis was stirred up, they would not have the courage to say that the doctrine of Paul, in its splendid unity, was gradually formed in the course of twenty years by an amalgamation between Jewish messianism and the pagan mysteries. The history of the two religious systems was a struggle during three centuries. The pagan religions, especialy the old naturalistic religions of Osiris, of Adonis and of Attis, tried in vain to divest themselves of their native grossness by means of a transcendant symbolism. Christianity, a religion of the spirit, would more than once have been contaminated by them had not ecclesiastical authority preserved the faithful. The suffering god who fought the most energetically with Christ, and who really contended with Him for souls, was Attis, the most despised of all, with the taurobolia, or baptisms of blood, which it was claimed were more efficacious than the baptism of water. But what philosophical speculations could rehabilitate that douche of blood, which, as M. Cumont remarks, reminds one of some orgy of cannibals. [1]

1. *Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain,* p. 88.

TENTH LECTURE

CONCLUSIONS

It is always very imprudent to say that we are at a turning point of history, for history unfolds its events without revealing the secret of the future. But never have the disasters of any period called more urgently for reconstruction upon firmer foundations. Will a more intense spiritual and religious life spring from the present chaos? Yes, because the spirit of heroism and faith has hovered over the most horrible display of the powers of matter. As regards the studies with which we have been dealing, there are two indications that we are nearing a time when men must accept Christianity in the Church, such as she understands it, or renounce Christianity.

The first of these indications is that return of many independent critics to the ancient exegesis of the Church, of which we spoke in our last conference. The second is the attempt of an uncompromising radicalism to eliminate Jesus from history. This attempt, though assuredly vain and even puerile, has revealed the weakness of Liberal exegesis, already undermined by the assaults of the Eschatologists and of the historians of religion.

At first sight, this last freak seems to justify those who regard German exegesis as a manifestation of continuous and increasing hostility towards

the authority of the sacred books.[1] But in reality, instead of being the last word of a progressive onslaught, it is a reversion to the style of attack in vogue a century and a quarter ago. Dupuis[2] and Volney[3] maintained that Christianity is an astral myth. The latest and most daring system is inspired by the same principles and has the same aim as these first essays of an integral and outspoken rationalism. One cannot regard most German exegetes as responsible for such excesses. But our treatment of German exegesis would hardly be complete if we did not deal with the struggle produced in Germany by the effort to establish the thesis that the man Jesus never existed, or that his earthly existence is a negligible quantity in the history of Christianity. We shall, then, briefly indicate the principal tenets of the new school and the general attitude assumed towards it, before we endeavor to set forth the present position of German exegetes, and to state the characteristics of German exegesis as a whole.

I

The Savior God and Jesus of Nazareth.

Strauss had not gone so far in negation as our latest mythicists, since he wrote a *Life of Jesus;*

1. Fillion, *Les Étapes du rationalisme,* p. 2.
2. *Origine de tous les cultes ou Religion universelle.*
3. *Les Ruines ou Méditations sur la Révolution des Empires.*

and ever since the days of Strauss, the great majority of German exegetes, we may say nearly all, had thought that they were consecrating themselves to a work of historical and religious restoration. It would be an error to regard these critics, professors of theology in Protestant faculties, as simple Voltairian free-thinkers. They even resented being called rationalists; and though, as a matter of fact, they did not recognize any authority but reason, they affected to make much of the authority of Jesus, considered as one endowed with the highest religious reason that ever existed. They undertook to found a new Christianity on the basis of their erudition, which they hoped to impose upon all Protestantism, — while awaiting further conquests, — as the religion of the future, a German religion, issuing from the Reformation of Luther. The life of Jesus, His acts, His doctrine were to be objectively set forth under the sole influence of the documents. Much clearing away of traditional belief was, indeed, called for; but this was carried out with the view of reaching the solid rock of history. Let us recall their system. Jesus, who is as well known to us as can be Socrates or Epictetus, had not asked worship for Himself; this was due only to His Father. He revealed to us that we are all children of God; and that the more we know God as Father, the more we deserve to be called His sons. Jesus, the revealer of this religion, or rather of religion itself, was, then, preeminently the Son. In St. Paul He is already represented as existing in heaven before becoming son of David; according to the Fourth Gospel, He is altogether the Son of

God. Men spontaneously gave Him worship, which He would have repudiated, after having transformed moral sonship into natural sonship.

The adoration of a man founded upon the double sense of the word son, was a rather venturesome conjecture. A new school, seeking to strengthen the theory, proposes to leave out of consideration the passionately monotheistic and exclusive Jews, and to consider the change which transformed the historical Jesus into a God as taking place among pagans, familiar with the idea of gods appearing in human form and of men becoming gods. In the time of Jesus, this school assert, people were, in the mystery-religions, imploring salvation from a god who had died and risen.

We have seen the fragile nature of this system. No one who really understands the beliefs of paganism and the faith of the first Christians can hold it. Had the divinity of Jesus not been taught at the starting-point of Christianity, men would never have believed Him God. This view of the matter is shared with Catholics by those whom we have spoken of as eliminating Jesus from history. Fully resolved not to acknowledge His supernatural character and yield to His claims, they have solved the problem by suppressing His humanity! Jesus, they argue, was certainly adored; and since it is impossible that a man should be so seriously taken as a God, in a fully historical period, Jesus can never have existed as man; His divinity was acknowledged at a time earlier than that of His so-called human existence.

I allow that this statement that Jesus never

existed is no less opposed to common sense than to Christian sentiment; but I wish to point out, even in the worst of errors, what may contribute to the defense of the truth. It is noteworthy, you will agree, that the divinity of Jesus should appear to certain critics so well established at the beginning of Christianity that it would be easier to deny His human personality than the Divine character which He has in history. When an effort was made to prove that William Tell never existed, I do not think that anyone inferred that there had been a worship of William Tell among the ancient dwellers of the Four Cantons. And, besides, the argumentation of Mr. William Benjamin Smith against the Liberals is not without worth. [1] They draw from St. Mark a purely human picture of Jesus. But (leaving aside the fact so well brought out by Wrede that this is a misinterpretation of St. Mark) how did this Jesus become God with time? He is already God in St. Paul, who, according to critics, is earlier than St. Mark. If the Liberals were logical they should place St. Mark before the four great Epistles of St. Paul; and they should even deny the authenticity of these Epistles, which not only teach Christ's divinity, but are wholly taken up with this Christ who came from heaven and returned thither, rather than with a Jesus of history. The apparition of Christ upon earth is the theme of the Evangelists, Mr. Smith contends. What created the primitive community according to him, was not the divinity

1. Cf. *Revue biblique*, 1900, p. 645.

of Jesus, but the appearance in Galilee and in Judæa of the God Jesus under the form of a simple mortal. So the inconsistencies of Liberal Protestantism prepared the way for the paradoxical negation of the existence of Jesus, or for the view that if (as Mr. Smith holds) a personage bore that name in Galilee, His existence amounted to so little that it is without importance for the religious history of mankind. But as the Christ-God cannot be eliminated from history, an origin must be found for Him; it would even be well to explain by an anterior worship the historical myth of the Gospels. A hard task! Only the first part of the program has been rough- drafted — and poorly.

We may distinguish three combinations. Those who are most heedless of texts, veritable *dilettanti* of exegesis, bring the myth directly from the stars. This is in the manner of Dupuis. Mr. Schweitzer cites a Pole, Andrzej Niemojewski, [1] probably a German citizen, and a German officer, who has assumed the name of Fuhrmann (driver). [2]

The *Driver* brings us to heaven; the kingdom of heaven of Jesus is the starry heaven, etc. I spare you this astronomy, which is unintelligible to me. There is a great distance from the stars to Galilee and the Gospel; there should be an intermediary stage; the ancient literatures should supply it with at least a preliminary sketch of the Galilean myth.

1. *Gott Jesus im Lichte fremder und eigener Forschung samt Darstellung der evangelischen Astralstoffe, Astralszenen und Astralsysteme,* Munich, 1910, 2 vol., 577 pp. Polish edition in 1909.

2. *Der Astralmythus von Christus,* 1912, 284 pp.

Mr. P. Jensen has discovered one, all traced out in the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic. This very distinguished Assyriologist has astounded, or rejoiced, his rivals by a thoroughly characterized divagation. Gilgamesh has become the prototype of the heroes of antiquity; Jesus, after Abraham and Moses, was only an Israelite Gilgamesh. [1] Instead of administering fraternal correction to his colleague, Heinrich Zimmern, a no less competent specialist, was satisfied with formulating some reservations; he inclines personally to the theory of borrowings from Mithra, from Marduk and Tammuz. [2]

I have not named the initiator of this whole movement, because he wrote only in English. The *Christianity and Mythology* of Mr John Mackinnon Robertson appeared at London, in 1900; the third part, *The Gospel Myths,* was translated into German in 1910. But an American, Mr. William Benjamin Smith has his place here for his works appeared at Jena; apparently he thought that such seed could take root only in Germany. This first book, with a preface by Schmiedel, is entitled, " The prehistoric Jesus, with other studies preli-

1. The titles, being translated, are : " The Gilgamesh Epic in the history of the world ", 1st. vol. " The origins of the Old Testament legend of the patriarchs, prophets, and liberators, and the New Testament legend of Jesus ", Strasburg, 1906, 1030 pp. — " Moses, Jesus, Paul. Three variants of the Babylonian legend of the man-god Gilgamesh. An accusation against some theologians and sophists, and an appeal to laymen. " 1909, 63 pp. — " Did the Jesus of the Gospels really live? An answer to Professor Julicher, " 1910, 32 pp.

2. *Zum Streit um die Christusmythe,* 1910, 66 pp.

minary to the history of the beginnings of Christianity." The title of the second work, *Ecce Deus,* is like an answer to the *Ecce homo* of Mr. T. Seeley.[1] With the precision of a mathematician, Mr. Smith has resolutely pursued the unknown, the religion of the savior god of whom was made the Jesus of the Gospel. In the course of his researches, he has understood that the myth (an elusive myth) could not alone explain the Gospel story. Reverting to the mistaken ways of Bruno Bauer, he has seen in the actions and teachings of Jesus the reflection of the convictions and aspirations of His followers. This most attenuated form of the new mythical hypothesis is mitigated by the method of Strauss.

Here is what Mr. Smith met with in his readings, and what serves his imagination as material for the religion he has constructed. Jesus signifies Savior, as we all know from the Gospel; it is in Hebrew the name of that Josue who led the Hebrews into the promised land. Mr. Robertson had already made a God of Josue. The name suggested worship, as did that other name given to Jesus, Nazarene; this means Protector. In the first century B. C. a Savior God was adored under many forms. Jesus Nazarene was one of them. The name Christ, king or judge, was scarcely less suggestive of homage. The union of the two names in one, Jesus Christ, marks the beginning of Christianity, about a hundred years before the

2. *Der vorchristliche Jesus nebst weiteren Vorstudien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums,* 1906, 243 pp. — *Ecce Deus, Die urchristliche Lehre des reingöttlichen Jesu,* 1911, 315 pp.

Christian era. The god was adored by a Jewish sect, of hellenistic tendencies, rather widely spread in the Empire. Proofs? Mr. Smith gets some by antedating a hymn of the Ophites, Christian Gnostics who celebrated Jesus as God, and a Paris papyrus of the IV century, in which we find the words : " I conjure thee by Jesus, the god of the Hebrews. " The other proofs are equally weighty. But how came a divine myth to be humanized in the Gospel? The lightning-like reign of God comes to the help of the hypothesis, with its chief, who will be the Messias, or Michael, or the Son of Man, and whose *anastasis*, an enthronement or resurrection, put men on the way to the Risen Christ.

The suggestions of Mr. Smith have less importance in themselves than in their influence on Mr. Drews. [1] With this scholar, the negation of the history of Jesus hitherto not taken seriously, becomes serious and agressive, appeals to public opinion, raises considerable agitation. Noisy meetings are held; pamphlets are launched; brochures rain upon the assaillants; Father Fillion has given a long account of this exegetical battle. [2]

I cannot, as I have already intimated, regard this system as a legitimate emanation of Germanism.

1. Arthur Drews, born in 1865 at Uetersen (Holstein), professor of Philosophy at Karlsruhe, has written on Kant, Hegel, Wagner, Nietzsche and Ed. von Hartmann, and a work called *Die Religion als Selbst-Bewusstsein Gottes* (Leipzig, 1906), before writing under Mr. Smith's influence, *Die Christusmythe* 1st and 2nd part, 1909 and 1911, *Die Petruslegende*, 1910, and undertaking the campaign described in Fillion, *Les étapes du rationalisme*.

2. *Les étapes*..., pp. 320-346.

Arthur Drews is a German professor, but this name is English. The same may be said of Robertson and of Smith. Whittaker [1] is English, Bolland [2] is Dutch. Mr. Lubinski [3] is doubtless a Pole, as well as Mr. Niemojewski. Moreover all German exegetes, Liberals, Eschatologists, historians of religions, save rare exceptions, have combined against the invaders. For invaders they are, in the field of exegesis, since Robertson is a mythologist, Smith a professor of mathematics, Jensen an Assyriologist, Drews a philosopher who preaches the holy war in the name of Pantheism. One cannot, then, justly say : " See what German criticism leads to. " German criticism has energetically protested, and, being upon its own ground of exegesis, has sent back to their own studies incompetent amateurs.

Nevertheless the battle has been fought upon German soil, many German consciences have been troubled, and such a radical destruction of Christianity has appeared desirable to too many of the adepts of pantheism. We congratulate, indeed, German exegesis on having proved the existence of Jesus. But is this enough to found a true Christianity? Are things still in that state of stagnation and compromise which permitted the Liberal school so long almost to dominate in the name of history and of Scripture? We must speak plainly, and ask the further question : Are the

1. *The origins of Christianity,* Londres, 1904.

2. *De evangelische Jozua,* Leyde, 1907.

3. *Die Entstehung des Christentums aus der antiken Kultur,* 1910. — *Das werdende Dogma vom Leben Jesu,* 1910.

professors of Protestant theology in Germany still Christians?

II

Present Position of German Exegetes.

In our investigation concerning the present status of German exegesis, we might leave aside Mr. Drews and the partisans of the ultra-mythological school; since they are not exegetes. They do not claim the title and seem rather proud of the fact that they are not experts in this particular line; they bid defiance to specialists, and ridicule their delays. Like so many other absolute minds, they think that they alone are sincere, because they see only one side of questions; they deem themselves courageous because they boldly manifest their intention to ruin Christianity. And courage is, indeed, required to face, not the Inquisition, but ridicule. Knowing well the instincts of Germany, they like to speak of the religion of the future, with von Hartmann, rather than of the irreligion of the future, with Guyau. But their religion is based on a conception, called scientific, of a world from which God is absent, because He is made to be part of the world. Their ethics is deduced, such as it is, from the relationship of their conscience with this world; they do not need the ethics of Jesus Christ, which they have agreed to look upon as a mere adaptation of ancient symbols.

In France, one might announce their near disap-

pearance; though religious mysticism is still respected here, mysticism without religion raises a smile. But Germans, since the days of Schelling, are able to get along with pantheism as a foundation for religious sentiment; so this neo-mythicism, beaten upon the field of history, may live on as a protest of the pantheists against Protestant exegesis. Already, however, Jensen and Steudel have fallen back upon supporting trenches in the school of the history of religions.

The leaders of this historical school have not deemed it compromising to uphold the existence of Jesus. Professor Bousset has written a tract on "the significance of the person of Jesus for faith."[1] Jesus retains His value as a symbol. — A symbol of the faith of which He is the object? — The term cannot easily be defined; apparently it was purposely chosen to leave the Master in the background. The representatives of the comparative method are, however, evidently in a poor position to oppose mythicism, whether pure or mingled with symbolism. They will not concede that Jesus was adored before His lifetime. But is it more likely that the man Jesus, recognized as Messias or not, should have so quickly become the object of adoration as Savior, thanks to predispositions created by the worship of an Osiris or an Attis? Taking things all in all, the mythicists would seem to have made a useful suggestion to the historians of religion by their hypothesis of the worship of the Savior among certain Jews.

1. 1910, 17 pp.

The school of history of religions has paid homage to the realism of St. Paul in the theory of grace and of the sacraments; but it has exaggerated this realism, and confounded it with magic. St. Paul changed Christianity, they maintain. As for Jesus, He preached penitence. Such preaching, valuable for salvation, was nothing new in Israel. What can be the value for our times of the person and doctrine of this last of the Jewish prophets?

This depends evidently upon what is thought of His preaching in regard to the last things. The historians of religions are neighbors here of the Eschatologists. But among the Eschatologists many are nearer to us than the upholders of the comparative method, because they do not see in St. Paul, any more than in the synoptic Gospels, any element derived from pagan religions. They hold that the sacraments may have been instituted by Christ as a means to prepare believers beforehand for a participation in the reign of God. This notion would not be far wrong if it were not connected with the idea that, in preparing for the near advent of the reign, Jesus was enveloped in the common error of His time. May one propose to the modern intelligence as a leader one who would have despaired of the future of the world?

Mr. Schweitzer, the type of the consistent Eschatologists, appears to be a man endowed with a generous soul and a noble character; he does not wish to give up Christ altogether. He does not expect light from Him. He dreams of a religion independent of history, and of every figure of history; because he holds that the greatest genius

can dominate only the conceptions of his time; and he dreams at the same time of a religion independent of every metaphysical adhesion, of a religion in which the man who believes in a personal God may live in brotherly communion with the man who does not distinguish God from the world. In this supreme abstraction, he does not detach himself from Jesus, because he holds that the whole of man consists in a will which is high, healthy, energetic; and that the soul never feels itself more exalted and more pure than when it is in contact with Jesus. He preserves of Christianity not the worship of Jesus, but the mysticism of Jesus. And he speaks with such fervor that we like to imagine the Master saying to him : Thou art not far from the reign of God!

However deformed by the intemperance of Culture, every aspiration towards Jesus is good for the soul. Yes, one who proposes to consecrate his strength and his life to the service of his brethren, meaning all humanity, will draw from the example of the Savior a secret power, and, whatever he may say, he will receive light from His words; Jesus came to bring this law of charity to the world. But charity towards men was for Him but the same thing as the love of God. The salvation He proposed was eternal life with His Father. The Eschatologists are right in restoring this accent to His appeals, in recalling His insistence to the one thing necessary : admission into the kingdom. But what if all this is but the vision of one deluded?

The Liberals are in the right when they return thanks to Jesus for having revealed the price of the

soul and a religion full of confidence in the goodness of the Father, and for having announced the remission of sins. But is salvation for them a reality if they do not believe in the immortality of the soul? And what do those who believe in this ask of the Savior? If He is not God, His actions have no efficacy for others; if He was not sent by God, the Revealer of truth, His doctrine is necessarily restricted; it cannot be useful to our generation. In vain is His genius extolled. It is very well to say with emotion that no other has spoken as He has of the soul, of the neighbor, and of God. For our part, we do not seek elsewhere for the words of life. But after all the question is whether God calls us to Him and if His designs in our regard are those which Jesus has made known. Now the Liberals cannot even decide what Jesus thought of Himself. They eliminate the Fourth Gospel in order not to be obliged to reject as coming from Him claims which they judge intolerable. They have not yet dealt with the same claims in the form St. Mark gives them; they have apparently not yet taken in the full import of the affirmations of the Second Gospel. Under pressure from the Eschatologists, they now make more room in their system for the Messiahship of Jesus. But here arises new embarrassment. Will not that Son of Man who announces His return upon the clouds compromise Himself in the opinion of our time? And on the other hand, if Jesus did not say that He was the Messias, what word reported as His can be relied on, and what can be known of His history?

Furthermore, can the disciples of Holtzmann and Harnack share in the worship of Jesus without going against their conscience? And if they withdraw, can they still call themselves Christians? Are they really much different from the rationalists who were the contemporaries of Lessing? In the fight against the mythicists, the Liberals have defended the historical existence of Jesus as the very foundation of religion. And the mythicists might have said to them : " What can be the service to religious souls of this Jesus to whom you have refused divinity? Do you really hold to Him so strongly? and what do you make of Him? You cry out about scandal, you arouse religious passions; this clamor is no longer in season. Choose between the preachers and the University. "

Some have returned to the meeting-house. Lutheran orthodoxy has gained recruits during this controversy, and more will be gained. The Jesus of Liberal history is a very insignificant figure alongside of the Savior, of the King of Kings, of the Incarnate God whom the churches worship. Rather than yield themselves to doubt, many will return to the ancient confessions of faith. We would like to hope that these religious souls will go as far as the Catholic Church. Lutherans cannot ignore the absolute condemnation passed by criticism upon Luther's interpretation of St. Paul. They cannot pretend that, to pass this judgment, critics arbitrarily choose texts, eliminate those which do not tell for their thesis, allow themselves to be borne along by the current of new ideas. No, criticism takes the texts as they are, interprets

them in the light of history, and this method forces it to give to the words the old meaning they had in the Catholic Church.

German exegesis has, then, constructed no system which is not already destroyed, shaking, or battered down in some of its essential facts. It may console itself with the thought that it has done all this work alone, both construction and demolition. Luther set the world on fire to re-establish the real thought of St. Paul concerning the conditions of salvation; a very considerable number, I believe that it is to-day the great majority, of German exegetes see that he was mistaken. — The deists explained the origin of Christianity and of the inspired books by means of an audacious imposture on the part of Jesus' disciples. This accusation had hardly been formulated when honest science blushed for it; Lessing did not dare openly to defend Reimarus. — It appeared prudent and wise to preserve Christianity divested of its supernatural character, reducing the Gospel miracles to natural events. — Strauss destroyed this system of the Rationalists, but had no success in replacing it. For the first mythological explanation of Christianity has failed; myths made on the pattern of Old Testament happenings and predictions are manifestly an insufficient explanation of the new, ardent and conquering faith of Christians. — The school of Tübingen thought to find the starting-point of a fruitful spiritual activity in the opposition between the principle of Jewish legalism and Pauline liberty of spirit. But Albert Ritschl has well shown that divergencies on secondary points presupposed unity

of views, the source of which remained unrevealed by Baur.

These old systems do not explain the meaning of Christianity nor its origin; too often they give a wrong meaning to the texts, and their interpretations have had to be rectified.

Have more recent systems succeeded better? The Liberals have been able to spread in very extensive circles a Life of Jesus accepted as true to history; but they neglected the supernatural which is manifestly contained in their texts, not merely by eliminating passages but by attenuating the meaning of the passages they retained; the Eschatologists have made this clear. — Are the Eschatologists more scrupulous interpreters? Not always. The Liberals rightly accuse them of giving a wrong meaning to the Parables. No one has proved that the Jewish people had their gaze fixed upon the clouds of heaven awaiting the advent of the Son of Man; and according to the evidence of the texts, they were ready to follow a temporal Messias, son of David. — Historians of religions do not attempt to extract from the words of the New Testament their supernatural content; but they indulge in exaggeratedly realistic expressions on the subject of infused grace and of the sacraments; and they are led astray by fanciful comparisons. — As for the mythologists of the last hour, it must be said to their credit that they are not scandalized by the plain meaning of texts which teach the divinity of Jesus. They recognize that from the earliest days of Christianity He was worshipped as God. But in their fanciful assertion that His divinity and the

worship thereof went back to pre-Christian days, they have consolidated the preachers and the professors against them. They are like Ismael : " He will be as a wild ass; his hand will be against all, and all shall raise their hand against him. " [1]

III

Causes of the Failure of German Exegesis.

Can it be, then, that we are to see the end of the controversy started by the innovators of the XVI century? This can hardly be hoped for, to such an extent has this, variously diluted Christianity become a German religion. But serious minds will find food for thought in the history of German exegesis; many upright souls will find in it a reason to come back to the Catholic Church. Will not the noble English nation realize how mediocre is this importation from Germany?

Already many Englishmen have recognized that all this formidable labor has failed to obtain positive results. Mr. Headlam, a distinguished scholar, collaborator of Mr. Sanday in the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, wrote, last year, that the work of Mr. Schweitzer entitled " From Reimarus to Wrede " has convinced most people both of the marvelous intellectual effort and of the com-

1. Gen. xvi, 12.

plete lack of success of this century of German erudition.[1]

Whence this failure? Not to speak of the principal cause, which is the revolt against the teaching authority of the Church, I believe I can assign two characteristic causes.

The first is a kind of doctrinal opportunism. The Church we have seen, is not shocked by the supernatural in Scripture. Living by supernatural influence, believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ, she is prepared to accept the statement of the Gospels that the Son of God made man worked miracles, announced future events, promised to send the Holy Ghost. She accepts at their face value texts written under deep conviction of the reality of the supernatural. And furthermore, these texts being the word of God, she would consider it a sacrilege to disregard their true meaning.

Once Luther entered upon the scene, Scripture became an arsenal to supply proofs for anything that had to be established. The heresiarch did not recoil from the supernatural, but he understood it in his own way, and then adapted the texts to his own doctrine. It was a fatal example!

At the end of the XVIII century, reason took Christianity in tow; exegesis again had to be adapted to the fashion of the day. This opportunism inspired the commentaries of the Rationalists; later, regard due to religious sentiment led in a contrary direction, to the conciliation

1. *English Theology,* by the Rev. A. C. Headlam, D. D., in *Theologisch Tijdschrift,* 1907, p, 152.

theology. The radical schools are naturally freer, but numerous inconsistencies show their care not to break with the confessions of faith.

All we ask of this independent criticism is that it be purely scientific. It will be altogether scientific only when it will have divested itself, not merely of opportunism, but also of a second fault common to all the schools which we have enumerated, one-sidedness. All have been *einseitig*, looking only at one side of questions.

This adjective is not altogether synonymous with systematic. Assuredly Germans are much given to building systems, and systems in the air. But I venture to say that if the English, who are very practical, have little taste and aptitude for speculations, we are past masters in the art of systematic construction. It is a heritage that comes to us from scholasticism, which itself inherited from Aristotle and Socrates the habit of distinguishing concepts, of defining them and then arranging them in a fine order. I insist on this harmony. We want all the elements to agree, all conclusions to show themselves legitimate by the good accord which they maintain with one another; we are satisfied only when everything within is consistent and when nothing mars outwardly the purity of the lines. Sometimes the question is one of tact and good sense.

Such is not the systematizing of the Germans. They are one-sidedly systematic. They discover an idea, cling to it, give it free rein, unheedful of difficulties or even of contradictions. Every thing is, whether or no, squeezed into the system, until

it crumbles. All the explanations attempted by German exegesis sin in this way. Each of the leaders takes up the documents as if no one before him had discovered their secret. He gets hold of certain ideas hitherto neglected by others (or by himself), and attaches to them decisive importance; all is subordinated to a predominating notion. This method has its seductiveness. For I realize that eclecticism is as sterile in exegesis as in philosophy One could not discover the meaning of Christianity by a grouping of texts if he did not penetrate to the *raison d'être* of the whole. Christianity is an organism whose vital principle is one. This vital principle, long since discovered, is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, salvation assured to men by the grace of the redemption. To leave this aside and to seek for any other principle, was to get on a wrong track. But there are many wrong tracks. The Germans erred, to speak in general terms, in becoming absorbed in isolated concepts, in riveting themselves to certain texts, in being carried away by certain analogies. The genuine Latin spirit does not experience less difficulty than does the German spirit in subjecting itself to the authority of tradition. Latins, too, have that human inclination to follow their own lights, which St. Paul could call the flesh. But the Latin genius does not attempt to make over an organism with haphazard means.

At the risk of fatiguing you by repetitions, I shall once more go over the same story.

I look for one-sided (*einseitig*) in the dictionary and I find : having, or considering only one side;

hence, incomplete; narrow; superficial; systematic. German exegesis has always been one-sided. Incomplete the exegesis of Luther, who was hypnotized by some texts of St. Paul, in which faith is opposed to works, and could not perceive that this faith is the adhesion of the whole soul to Christianity, and that justification is the beginning of sanctification.

Narrow, to the point of ineptness, was Reimarus when he charged the Apostles with imposture, and represented Christianity as issuing from a fraud.

Superficial and ridiculous is the Rationalist explanation, which sees only the natural aspect of a history over which rises the reign of God.

Narrowly systematic, the interpretation imagined by Strauss who transformed the miracles of a conquering faith into myths made upon an ancient model.

What shall we say of Petrinism and Paulinism, a veritable tight-rope over which Baur could pass only by keeping his eyes fixed upon one point?

The Liberals have appeared more disposed to look at the different sides of Christianity, but they have kept of Christianity hardly any more than its moral teaching, and that transformed for the use of the present world.

Eschatologism, for its part, proud of its one-sidedness, flatters itself that it has found that one center from which radiates the light of Christianity. It would be right, if it did not restrict the last things to one sole catastrophic intervention of God, refusing to recognize the temporal messianism of the Jews, transforming the moral teaching of Jesus

into a provisory system, the Parables into an announcement of the end of the world.

Syncretism notwithstanding the promise of its name, is a narrow concept. The historians of religions have not, however, fallen under the spell of particular texts of Scripture; in fact it is outside of the Bible that they have gathered the traits of a mystery-religion. And while they seek for the analogies which Christianity offers with other religions, they remain blind to its powerful originality. No amalgamation of paganism and Jewish messianism could produce Christianity.

The reliance which the mythicists place upon their own preconceived notions, rather than upon the documents, is evident and they do not even try to conceal it.

This exegesis, supported by grammars, dictionaries, dissertations of all kinds, contains an enormous mass of very useful information; but to admire unreservedly this prodigious intellectual activity, I should require that it be less intoxicated by its supposed discoveries, less open to extravagant novelties and even to contradictory notions, less disposed in practice to a certain doctrinal opportunism, and, withal, less contemptuous for the rest of the world.

Its faults are, if I am not mistaken, racial or cultural traits. Lessing remains a typical case. He was bold in launching a new system, but too prudent to uphold it; he preserved Christianity in which he did not believe; he was keen in research, which he preferred to the possession of the truth. Truth wishes to be loved for its own sake.

Some contemporary German exegetes have gone much further than Lessing. They are the ninety-three intellectuals who signed the " Appeal to the civilized world. " They accepted as scientific truth, with cheerful insolence, the lies which the imperial government of Germany thought fit to spread among neutrals to dishonor Belgium after having violated her neutrality. Let us make every allowance. But should these critics have been in such haste? Should they not have taken time to read other documents than those of the General Staff? They have rejected the miracles of the Gospel, on the ground that the multitude believes in miracles too easily, and they did not ask themselves if the German troops had not been hypnotized by the suggestion of Belgian *franc-tireurs.* Really their attitude is disheartening for those who have esteem for criticism. How credit its arduous researches about the past, that book sealed with seven seals, when it has fallen into such gross delusions concerning the present? We continue to speak in accordance with the most favorable hypothesis! Happily the Gospel miracles were attested by witnesses who had the truth more at heart.

To be complete, I shall here mention another characteristic of the German critics, namely, the settled determination not to believe in the supernatural. In accordance with this determination each decides what may have been said or done in such or such circumstances, what is authentic and what is not. Some are more skilful in eliciting from the texts the meaning they want to find in

them, others more ingenious in getting rid of what is embarrassing. But this is a general feature of unbelieving exegesis upon which our apologists have sufficiently dwelt. Germany set the pace, but imitators have been found everywhere; Dutch radicals, others perhaps, have even surpassed them in arbitrariness. German subjectivism, of which so much has been said, manifests itself more strikingly in efforts at restoration than in brutal denial, as we may see in the synthesis of Schleiermacher and of Ritschl, theologians of conciliation and compromise.

But these attempts at organization have failed; German exegesis has vainly sought for the meaning of Christianity. It has not replaced the traditional meaning.

IV

Continuity of the Church's Teaching.

Among those who most readily agree that the German exegetical systems concerning the origin and meaning of Christianity have failed to replace the system of the Church, there may be some who think that they have succeeded in their negative task.

To answer this doubt would be to begin another series of lectures. However, I wish to say a few words about the principal difficulty, that which concerns the evolution of doctrines, because in this

matter there is a certain amount of apparent unanimity, among our adversaries.

Exegesis cannot be expected to furnish proofs which will render the act of faith necessary. This act is always free. It is enough that the exegete establish the continuity of primitive dogma, and guarantee the reality of the facts. If the dogma that the Church teaches is that which the Apostles taught and which was manifested to them in the words and acts of Jesus, interpreted with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are placed directly in presence of the Savior. Now this continuity has been questioned at three points : between Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels, between the Synoptics and St. Paul, between St. Paul and St. John. With the Fourth Gospel we are in full Catholicism, or at least the first Fathers, St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius, St. Justin, lead to it without any gap. But between the Fourth Gospel and St. Paul there is said to be an impassable crevice. The Johannine difficulty really consists in this. Differences of frame as compared with the synoptics have very little significance alongside the pretended opposition of dogma : on the one hand the reign of God which is to be inaugurated by a catastrophic judgment, on the other, the Spirit already given and inaugurating the new era. Such is, if I am not mistaken, the objection of the Eschatologists. But the historians of religion, whether intentionally or not, have given to this objection a decisive answer. The Spirit given in St. John is given already in St. Paul. Professor Bousset has told us how fully and in how stable a manner. The Spirit in St. John

uses matter, water in baptism, bread which becomes the flesh of Christ. But this quality, at the same time realistic and spiritual, of the sacraments is likewise in St. Paul. St. John teaches the divinity of Jesus, but St. Paul is no less affirmative; only he has not to place this affirmation in the mouth of the Savior. The positive fundamental element of doctrine and of mysticism, of that deep mysticism which grows out of the Incarnation, is then identical in St. Paul and in St. John. It matters very little that St. Paul has not the term Word or Logos; St. John himself has placed it in his prologue only. Nevertheless, the atmosphere does seem different! Dreading the outbreak of Divine wrath, St. Paul presses on towards the future like those runners whose body is bent forward; John calmly contemplates the work of salvation accomplished by the Incarnate Word. True! But, then, the Church never held that the Fourth Gospel was contemporary with the Pauline Epistles. Catholics place the Epistle to the Romans shortly after the year 50 and the Fourth Gospel shortly before the year 100. This is a long lapse of time in such a productive period. During the interval threatening clouds had disappeared; the storm had broken over Jerusalem. The perspectives are more clearly drawn. But the doctrines have not changed.

The connection between the Synoptics and St. Paul is not so clear. But the greater number of critics place the four great Epistles before the redaction of the Gospel of St. Mark. The contrasts in this case cannot, then, be explained by progress of dogma, nor by a borrowing from foreign elements.

Here we have the historians of religion against us, since they make of St. Paul an intermediary through whom pagan dogma came into the Gospel; but the Eschatologists maintain the substantial identity of the teaching of St. Paul with the reproduction of the primitive catechesis in the Synoptics.

The purpose is different. Converted by the revelation of the Son of God, of the risen Christ, Paul invites the Gentiles to die to sin and to live for God by participation in the death and resurrection of the Son of God. He did not have to relate the life of Jesus, of which he had not been a witness. The Synoptists, on the other hand, proposed to relate the life of Jesus. For them, too, the decisive matter was the death and resurrection. They invoked with the same faith the name of the Lord. And, nevertheless, the glory of the Risen Jesus did not change the physiognomy of the lowly preacher of Galilee. This one fact is a guarantee of their honesty. No one would refuse to believe them if they did not relate miracles. But if these miracles were invented to justify faith, how did faith itself arise? Their testimony has not been shaken by criticism. And we unhesitatingly confirm it by the authority of St. John, the well-beloved disciple. For if the author of the Fourth Gospel does not give us a transformed doctrine, if in regard to the Spirit he agrees with St. Paul, he is not irreconcilable with the Synoptics in regard to the facts of history, and he is preeminently the witness who has seen. That he proposed to make the Greeks understand a doctrine of Jewish origin is not an absurd hypothesis of criticism. But did he need, to attain this

purpose, to invent stories? If the Fourth Gospel was what so many have claimed it is, the Gospel of an unknown writer, how came it to be received in the Church, notwithstanding the unexpected character of the complement of the Synoptic history which it presents? Criticism has not answered this question.

All has not been vain in the labor of German exegesis — helped, if you like, by some contradictors. We see more clearly than formerly that to reject Catholic dogma is to separate oneself from the faith of the first Christians, that to reject the supernatural is to refuse to believe the Apostles. And this testimony, besides assuring us that Jesus worked miracles, confides to us that messianic secret which was long kept by the Father, which Jesus' disciples had to wrest from Him, so to speak, but which was finally revealed by Him openly and clearly, because it concerns the salvation of the world to know who He is.

Now we have the formidable power to believe or not to believe. Choice upon which depends the salvation of each man, and the future of the world!

Of those who should be tempted to profess incredulity, I would ask that they weigh the terms. If they think that Jesus should be eliminated from history, there is nothing to say to them; let us leave them to settle accounts with common sense. German exegesis admits that Jesus existed, about as He is represented by our first two Gospels. Has it proved that He was only a man? We should have to know first what kind of a man. A sage, whose moral teaching would still be useful? But

declare the greater number of these masters, that man never existed. Jesus is more or less than a sage. He called Himself the ambassador of God, the head of the reign of God. If He was under an illusion, He was not a sage.

We are often asked about the present status of the criticism of the Gospels? What are we to believe about their authenticity? That is thought to be the whole question. We have said that our positions, in this respect, are very solid; but this is not the decisive point. This point is that no criticism of the texts, no elimination of the testimonies, no declaration against the authenticity of the Gospels or the Epistles suffices to take away from the figure of Jesus its supernatural character. If you do not reject absolutely all, like the mythicists, if you retain a residuum, however little, of the historical tradition concerning Jesus, it must be admitted that He held and manifested claims to a supernatural rôle and that He died for having done so. You are then ever brought back, after so many devious windings, by German exegesis itself, into the presence of Jesus, an object of contradiction, and you have to resign yourself to insult Him if you are not decided to adore Him.

Mr. Headlam, whom I have quoted before, has said that English public opinion cannot be satisfied with a purely human conception of the life of Jesus Christ. [1] Mr. Sanday has said : " He was yet essentially more than a man. " [2]

1. *L. l.*, p. 153.

2. *The Life of Christ in recent research*, p. 141, Oxford, 1907; Cf. *Revue biblique*, 1908, pp. 289 ff.

Then, say that He was a Man-God, like our councils : a Divine person in two natures. Anything else would be mythology, like Arianism, or disloyal equivocation.

It is easier to conceive of the infinite love of God which makes Him come down to us, than of that great angel of Arius, a son of God, like unto God, and nevertheless a creature. Who is like unto God? And how could the sentiment of being specially a son of God, whether it be clearly perceived or enveloped in mists of the sub-consciousness, make Jesus to be essentially more than a man?

There are men who refuse to distinguish between God and man, God and the world, and who regard religion as a divinization of man, who comes to rule over the world by his thought and free activity. To these Jesus is nothing; Strauss or other Hegelians gained little in making of Him the type of man become God. They have only to go ahead, towards an indiscernible good, like the desperate man who went on swimming on the high sea, though knowing well that he wouldnever reach the shore.

But all others see in religion a bond between God and us. We ask Him to unite us to Himself. To this union Jesus Christ invites us. Christianity is still, as for St. Paul, an energy, a power of God bringing unto salvation every one that believeth.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Aristophanes, 338.
Bacon, 101.
Bahrt, 134 ff.
Batiffol, 245, 256.
Bauer, 205, 231, 233 ff., 251, 266, 354.
Baur, 140, 159, 194, 195 ff., 230, 255, 369.
Bédier, 177.
Beyschlag, 257.
Binder, 177.
Boehme, 158.
Bolland, 356.
Boulanger, 105.
Bossuet, 57.
Bousset, 312 ff., 358, 373.
Bretschneider, 170.
Brunetière, 25.
Bruno, 94.
Bülow, 86 f., 90.
Chateaubriand, 124, 253.
Clemen, 323.
Condamin, 19 n.
Cornely, 256.
Coulange (Fustel de), 88.
Croenert, 18.
Cuq, 45.
Darwin, 168.
Denifle, 58 ff., 68 ff., 78 f., 81 f.
Descartes, 101.
Desmarais, 104.
Denk, 93.
Dhorme, 19 n.
Dieterich, 338.
Döllinger, 92.
Drews, 355 ff.
Duhem, 130 f.
Dupuis, 348, 352.
Durkheim, 130 f.
Eliot (George, Mary Ann Evans), 162, 171, 173.
Epictetus, 226.
Epicurus, 228.
Erasmus, 82.
Euripides, 227, 338.
Ficker, 72, 76.
Fielding, 99.
Fillion, 8 f., 348, 355.
Firmicus Maternus, 311 f.
Fischer, 240.
Frank, 93.
Fuhrmann, 352.
Gehrhardt, 95.
Gesenius, 17.
Giesler, 247.
Giraud, 114.
Goetze, 121.
Grimm, 177.
Grisar, 69.
Guyau, 357.
Guyon, 100.
Harnack, 24, 60 f., 80, 91, 181, 240, 242, 254, 256, 258, 262, 268, 362.
Hartmann, 357.
Hase, 149 ff.
Hausrath, 164.
Headlam, 365 f., 377.
Hegel, 89, 93, 140, 159, 162, 168, 191, 240.
Heine, 106.

Heinrich, 59 f., 83 f., 95, 113, 123 f., 192.
Heitmüller, 322, 337.
Helvidius, 104.
Herbert of Cherbury, 101.
Hengstenberg, 231 f., 235.
Herder, 123 f.
Hess, 129 n.
Holbach, 103.
Holsten, 315.
Holtzmann, 242, 257 ff., 362.
Hoonacker, 19 n.
Hutten, 166.
Jacobi, 129 n.
Jacquier, 256.
Jaussen, 19 n.
Jensen, 18, 352, 356, 358.
Josephus, 236, 297 f.
Jülicher, 256.
Jundt, 68 f.
Juvenal, 225.
Kant, 89 f., 126, 141 ff., 153.
Kautzsch, 17.
Keim, 257.
Klopstock, 123.
Koerner, 158.
Kroll, 317.
Kuinol, 171.
Lagrange, 19 n., 58, 120, 186, 205, 211, 226, 284 f., 289, 298, 304, 306, 330.
Lake, 337.
Lamenais, 159.
Lamond, 69.
Lefèvre d'Etaples, 82.
Leibnitz, 126.
Lessing, 90, 106 ff., 143, 362 f.
Levesque, 247.
Lévy, 112, 158 f., 162 ff., 265.
Lichtenberger, 152, 154, 231 f., 238 f.
Littré, 170, 178 f., 191.
Loisy, 14, 168, 192, 268, 299, 310.
Loman, 205.
Lubinski, 356.
Luther, 33 f., 54 ff., 93, 95, 97, 133, 204, 231, 313 f., 322, 362 f., 366, 369.
Magny, 98 f.
Manen, 215.
Marklin, 159 ff.
Masson, 99 f., 105.
Merx, 262.
Michaelis, 56.
Naber, 205.
Niemojewski, 352, 356.
Opitz, 129.
Osiander, 97.
Ovid, 227.
Ozanam, 85 f.
Paquier, 58.
Pascal, 113, 121.
Passaw, 18.
Paulus, 127, 139 ff., 169, 171, 175, 183, 194.
Pauly, 16.
Perrot, 17.
Philo, 225 f., 236.
Pierson, 205.
Plato, 226, 236.
Plutarch, 338, 345.
Podechard, 19 n.
Quinet, 193.
Rapp, 161, 163 f.
Reimarus, 106, 110 ff., 166, 173, 314, 363, 369.
Reinhard, 128 ff.
Reitzenstein, 337.
Renan, 14, 92, 114, 159, 163, 166 f., 189, 264 f.
Robertson, 353 f.
Roscher, 16.
Rousseau, 100, 103 f., 113.
Sabatier, 152.
Saglio, 17.

Sallet, 192 f.
Sanday, 265, 377.
Saunders, 24.
Schelling, 159, 358.
Schenkel, 240 ff., 264.
Schiller, 11, 123.
Schleiermacher, 128, 143, 149 ff., 159, 169 f., 238 f., 243, 246, 372.
Schmiedel, 353.
Schweitzer, 7 f., 97, 112, 118, 122, 124, 129 ff., 137 ff., 149 ff., 155, 157, 162 f., 203, 232, 237, 242, 268, 271 ff., 287, 298, 303, 308 f., 336, 352, 359 f., 365.
Scholten, 264.
Schwartz, 255.
Seeley, 354.
Seneca, 223, 228, 236.
Smith (W. B.), 351 ff.
Smith (W. R.), 337 f.
Socinus, 94.
Spinosa, 140, 152.
Spitta, 255.
Stael, 56 f., 84 f.
Steck, 205.
Steudel, 358.
Strauss, 33, 112, 119, 140 f., 149, 156, 157 ff., 209, 231 f., 243 f., 246 f., 251, 255, 348 f., 354, 369, 378.
Tennhard, 98.
Teubner, 16.
Tillmann, 263.
Venturini, 137 ff., 171, 183.
Vigouroux, 93 f., 101, 112, 143 f., 193.
Vincent, 19 n.
Vischer, 159, 165, 167.
Volney, 348.
Voltaire, 103 ff., 106, 108, 113 f., 123, 166, 230.
Weinel, 337.
Weiss (B)., 257, 268.
Weiss (J)., 267 ff., 300, 302, 308.
Weisse, 249.
Weizsäcker, 257.
Wellhausen, 255, 262 f.
Wendt, 255.
Whittaker, 356.
Wieland, 106.
Windisch, 311.
Wissowa, 16.
Wolff, 126, 140.
Wrede, 18, 265 ff., 306, 351.
Zahn, 238.
Zimmermann, 159.
Zimmern, 353.

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La Grange
AUTHOR

Meaning of Christianity
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